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OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR OF CUSTODIAL SERVICES

REPORT OF AN ANNOUNCED INSPECTION OF
BORONIA PRE-RELEASE CENTRE FOR WOMEN



Report of an Announced Inspection of Boronia Pre-Release Centre for Women

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The Inspector's Overview

BORONIA WOMEN'S PRE-RELEASE CENTRE: THE SUCCESSFUL PRODUCT OF A COHERENT PHILOSOPHY FOR WOMEN-CENTRED IMPRISONMENT

The conclusion of this Report, stated up front (paragraph 1.3), is that “the achievements of Boronia in its first two years of operation are remarkable. The Centre is a model for good practice, women-centred approaches to managing female offenders in custody in almost all respects. Whilst there were certainly areas for improvement identified during the inspection, the Centre was operating remarkably effectively.”

It is an almost inevitable feature of bureaucratic process that the origins of good news stories become buried in obscure files. (This point is even truer of bad news stories, which very soon become bureaucratic orphans.) However, on this occasion it is worth putting on the public record the role that this Office played in the development of the philosophy that eventually flowed through operationally into Boronia. The story also does the Department credit.

In June 2002, we commenced our benchmark inspection of Bandyup Women's Prison. It was basically a men's prison occupied by women: male regimes, assumptions, classification rules, and staff attitudes. There were also some issues that seemed to involve improper conduct – or rather there was no process for ascertaining whether the frequent allegations we heard of such impropriety possessed any validity. Some processes, in particular the shackling of women during labour, verged on the barbaric. Our Report, tabled in May 2003, was extremely critical of the Prison and the Department.

The then Minister, concerned at the Report, challenged the Inspector to defend and validate the conclusions. The vigorous encounter that ensued apparently satisfied him, at which point he suggested that my Office should develop a blueprint for Women's Imprisonment. We did so, calling it “Key Steps to Reforming Women's Imprisonment in Western Australia”, providing it to him on 24 April 2003. The full document will now be placed on the Inspector's website. At this stage I would highlight some of the Steps that were identified. Boronia would not be the place that this inspection has shown it to be but for the fact that these steps have apparently been understood and adopted.

The key steps were as follows:

- Step 1** The first step towards progressive reform is to re-conceptualise women's imprisonment to remove it from the cultural context of men's imprisonment, give it 'equal but different' status to men's imprisonment, and be responsive to 'women prisoners', rather than 'prisoners who happen to be women'.
- Step 2** A prisoner-needs-based purpose of imprisonment needs to be articulated prior to and in order to form a foundation for gendered aims of imprisonment.
- Step 3A** The concept of 'women-centred' needs to be clearly defined, articulated and promoted.
- Step 3B** Women-centred aims of imprisonment need to be developed. At the very least, women who enter prison in Perth or in the regions should:
 - o feel and be safe;
 - o not suffer further detriment in terms of their physical, mental and emotional health, and ideally have improved health status at the end of their time in prison;

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- o feel their culture is respected;
- o have the necessary support to survive the regime without resorting to self-harm;
- o be supported in dealing with pressing domestic concerns, particularly when these involve children;
- o have adequate and appropriate contact with their children.

Step 3C Additional women-centred aims might be:

- o to encourage women prisoners' independence through relevant, culturally appropriate, women-centred educational, recreational, therapeutic, and work opportunities;
- o to encourage and promote well-functioning relationships between women prisoners and significant others, especially their children; and
- o to promote self-knowledge and self-esteem in women prisoners.

Step 4A A women's prison culture needs to be developed such that it:

- o understands and promotes the feminist or women-centred concept of *empowerment*, being mindful that hierarchical institutions like prisons are in themselves inherently disempowering;
- o as part of an empowering ethic supports the notion and practice of *genuine choices* for women, and a positive environment of *responsibility sharing*;
- o as part of an empowering ethic, is *responsive to and respectful of difference* (race/ethnicity/nationality, culture, sexuality, age, ability etc.);
- o is *inherently disciplined*, supportive and respectful....

Step 5A Reform in the area of assessment, classification and placement for women prisoners is fundamental and requires the following:

- o An assessment and classification tool for all prisoners that weights gender appropriately according to the international evidence on gender, violence and risk; or, that is devised specifically for women. The outcome of either approach will be more of a focus on women prisoners' needs.
- o Research should be undertaken on the arguments for and against a two-tiered classification system; and the current system for women restructured in light of the evidence and the Western Australian context.....

Step 5E Health care services for women prisoners should follow women's health care models, rather than traditional, masculine models as at present. The service needs to be holistic, embrace a shared care philosophy, be sensitive to issues of abuse and shame, and responsive to particular needs, such as those of Aboriginal women....

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Step 5G Staffing and promotional policies need to be reviewed within a gendered framework; female staff in particular should be recruited and trained specifically for the women's prisons; staff in or transferring to regional prisons holding women should be trained in gender awareness and the aims of women's imprisonment; and general recruit training should contain similar training modules.

Step 5H Women's prisons should be staffed on a needs basis, the needs being implied by the aims of women's imprisonment as outlined in Point 3 above.

The full version of this document was passed on to the Department, which at that time was already involved in planning the Boronia infrastructure and regimes. The views of the persons responsible for this were evolving along lines that were congruent with this Office's own philosophy. The women-centred thrust of the subsequent development was thus fortified and consolidated. When one considers today Boronia's strong points, they derive directly from various aspects of this philosophy.

Without summarising the full Report, I will cite four examples of this. First, the arrangements for mothers with their children are exemplary (Step 3C). The mother and child units are excellent both in terms of accommodation and in terms of resources and opportunities for the children. Second, health care services follow women's health care models and are well regarded by the women (Step 5E). Third, staffing policies do indeed follow a gendered model, and staffing is on a needs basis rather than being merely formulaic (Steps 5G and 5H). Fourth, the manner in which the prison shop is run encourages the making of genuine choices and the shared accommodation and self-care model creates a positive environment of responsibility sharing (Step 4A).

With regard to the role of women prisoners as mothers, the Prison management is aware of the danger that can arise out of policies that are intended to be progressive, namely that the presence of the child might be seen as a factor to assist the woman in coping with prison life and the question of the *best interests of the child* could inadvertently become a secondary factor. The best interests of the child must always be the primary consideration, and our Recommendation 11 is designed to strengthen the Department's absolute commitment to this value.

The matter that concerned us most, however, was the under-utilisation of this outstanding resource. The capacity is for 70 women; the average population has been under 50 throughout its existence. There were two main explanations for this. The first was some shortcomings at Bandyup Women's prison (the feeder institution) in terms of preparing women for the drastically less institutionalised and controlled environment that they would find at Boronia. The second was that assessment and classification system applicable to women had remained male-centred in its working assumptions, in contravention of our Step 5A. As to the first of these points, this was the subject of a Recommendation in our Report 36 relating to the inspection of Bandyup Prison, and some efforts are now being made to address our concern. As to the second, a joint working party involving the Director of Women's Custodial Services and our own Manager Inspections and Research has made recommendations to the Minister that should open up access to Boronia to a wider range of women prisoners.

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The flow-on effect of the recognition and visible implementation of a women-centred imprisonment philosophy can now also be seen at Bandyup which, as described in Report 36, has improved dramatically. One can say that imprisonment of women in the metropolitan area is one of the Department's good news stories. Unfortunately, conditions and regimes for women in regional prisons have not kept pace, and are indeed still sub-standard. Rectifying that deficiency is the next challenge in this area.

The other point that should be made is that Parliament and the public are entitled to know what impact this new approach is making upon re-offending rates and ideally upon other indicators of social disadvantage. Whilst Boronia Prison management attempt in an anecdotal and ad hoc way to keep track upon women who are released from there, still no systematic data exist that would enable a robust evaluation to be made. It is now time to put some such evaluative tool in place.

Boronia Women's Pre-Release Centre is one of the benchmark institutions for corrections in Western Australia and women's imprisonment in Australia. Subsequent to this inspection, three of the persons directly involved with its planning and the implementation of its regimes were jointly awarded the John Curtin Medal for Community Engagement – a well deserved accolade. The Department must ensure that it continues to build upon its excellent performance.

Richard Harding
Inspector of Custodial Services

21st December 2006.

Chapter 1

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW PRE-RELEASE CENTRE FOR WOMEN

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Boronia Pre-Release Centre for Women (Boronia) opened in May 2004 and replaced Nyandi Women's Prison (Nyandi) as Western Australia's only dedicated minimum-security facility for women bringing with it a unique and contemporary prison management style and philosophy. In its first two years of operation Boronia has established and largely achieved new standards for women prisoners and has become a model for good practice. While yet to take its full complement of prisoners, the centre was operating effectively, during the inspection.
- 1.2 This Report of the findings of the initial baseline inspection charts Boronia's achievements and provides recommendations for further improvement. The Inspectorate has high expectations for the future of women imprisoned at Boronia, and believes that this has established new benchmarks for the management of women elsewhere in the state.
- 1.3 Prisoners at Boronia were being referred to as 'residents' in support of normalising the prison environment and better preparing prisoners for their release. This Inspection Report has adopted this convention except where reference is being made to prisoners generally.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

- 1.4 Boronia's precursor, Nyandi Women's Prison, was originally established as the Nyandi Detention Centre for Girls and operated from 1970 until its closure in 1997. In December 1998 it was re-commissioned as a minimum-security prison for women. This was intended to be a temporary measure until another facility could be renovated, and it remained the only low security facility for women for some six years until Boronia opened in 2004.¹ Nyandi, which is situated adjacent to Boronia, is currently used as the Department of Corrective Services' Training Academy.
- 1.5 In response to an increase in the female prisoner population in the 1990s and a change of government in 2001, an overseas fact-finding mission to investigate best practice approaches to managing women in custody was undertaken by the Western Australian Attorney-General.² The result was the establishment of The Metropolitan Low Security Prison for Women Project in 2001.
- 1.6 The ambitious aim of the project was 'the development of a progressive new philosophy...to achieve world's best practice in management of women prisoners'.³ The project conducted extensive research of best practice literature and was informed by a Project Reference Group.

1 See the Inspectorate's *Report No. 10 of an Announced Inspection of Nyandi Prison* (February 2002).

2 Salomone, J (undated) *Towards Best Practice in Women's Corrections: The Western Australian Low Security Prison for Women*. Department of Justice.

3 Salomone, J (undated) *Towards Best Practice in Women's Corrections: The Western Australian Low Security Prison for Women*. Department of Justice, 2.

- 1.7 The Metropolitan Low Security Prison for Women Project Brief specified the following objectives for a new low security prison for women:⁴
- Successful reintegration of women into the community together with a reduced rate of recidivism;
 - An operational philosophy that recognises and incorporates the needs of women prisoners;
 - Reforms in the way women offenders are managed and a woman's perspective in design and operation of prison facilities;
 - Integration of the prison into the community and community into the prison; and
 - 'Normalisation' of living arrangements and management approaches.
- 1.8 The project was further informed by consultation with a wide variety of stakeholders, some of whom continue to be represented on the current Community Advisory Group. This group comprises representatives from the Department, from Boronia itself, and from the local community. It meets monthly and is a forum for discussion about the interface between Boronia and the local community. This presents opportunities to both 'showcase' Boronia's activities and initiatives, and also provides the community with opportunities to identify activities that would benefit the local community that Boronia could consider as part of its reparative strategy.
- 1.9 The then Department of Justice conducted a survey of women prisoners in Western Australia in 2002. The results of the initial survey revealed the following fundamental characteristics of women imprisoned in Western Australia:⁵ Sixty-three per cent had children under 18 years and the same percentage were single parents;
- Seventy-one per cent were unemployed in the six months prior to arrest, and 25 per cent had never held a paid job (51% of the Aboriginal women);
 - Sixty-one per cent reported a previous diagnosis of physical health issues;
 - Fifty-one per cent reported a previous diagnosis of mental health issues;
 - Eighty per cent reported frequent use of alcohol or drugs prior to imprisonment; and
 - Seventy-seven per cent reported a history of abuse either as an adult or a child.
- 1.10 In total, the consultative and research processes have provided a robust foundation for the qualitatively new approach to managing low-security female prisoners at Boronia - an approach that appears to better prepare these women for their release and return to the community. The test of just how successful Boronia will be will not be known for some time but the early indications are extremely promising and are discussed later in this report.

4 Ibid, p. 5

5 Department of Justice, *Profile of Women in Prison* (2002)

1.11 However, Boronia was born into an extremely sceptical political environment. There was a considerable concern expressed publicly at the concept of an open custodial environment operating within an established urban area, concern at many of the progressive principles that were being proposed, and finally concern that the facility was just too good for prisoners.⁶ Such criticism is never easy for a Government or for a Government Department to counter. There is seemingly always a section of the community that is able to be roused by the prospect that scarce resources will spent on prisoners. Certainly, there is never any shortage of worthy services which can make a legitimate claim on Government funds. Nonetheless, the prisons estate must be continually upgraded to keep pace with contemporary standards if prisons are to be able to meet the demands of securely managing prisoners and properly preparing them for a successful return to the community. To their credit, both the Government and the Department held to their progressive vision and these criticisms were assuaged and Boronia emerged with its women-centred philosophy intact.

THE BORONIA PHILOSOPHY

1.12 The Boronia philosophy is represented by four guiding principles. These principles, and how they translate into operational practice, are summarised in the table below.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE	HOW THIS TRANSLATES INTO OPERATIONAL PRACTICE
Women prisoners will be empowered through the exercise of personal responsibility.	Women at Boronia are offered the opportunity to make choices relating to their education, employment, health, family and personal development. All women at Boronia are employed, and employment and training is linked with real jobs in the community.
Women prisoners should be encouraged and facilitated to resume as much of their family responsibilities as practicable.	The provision of residential, permanent accommodation for children up to four years, with extended day and overnight visits for children up to 12 years, assists both the mother and the child's development. A family friendly visits centre and a flexible visits system are further indicators of the operationalisation of this principle.
Women prisoners should be encouraged and facilitated to resume as much of their community responsibilities as practicable.	All residents are encouraged to contribute to reparation to the community by being involved in activities within the community. In March 2006, the residents engaged in community work (Section 94) provided \$11,800 worth of services to groups, including the RSPCA, Foodbank and the Good Samaritans.
The interactions and treatment of women must be characterised by respect and integrity.	This is evident in the staff/resident relationships, and was confirmed in the focus groups with the residents that were conducted prior to the inspection. Residents are informed of the centre's guiding philosophies, and integrity is promoted by encouraging residents to be honest, and to behave and speak respectfully.

6 See for example, "Opposition promises to close 'luxury-style' women's prison," Wednesday 9 February 2005 ABC Western Australia, Local News, ABC Online Forum <http://www.abc.net.au/wa/news/200502/s1299343.htm>

BORONIA IN THE CONTEXT OF WIDER PRISON SYSTEM

- 1.13 Boronia does not function in isolation. It operates within the broad context of the custodial management of women at a number of other prisons in Western Australia. Prisoners at Boronia have largely been imprisoned elsewhere before coming to Boronia and must be carefully prepared for the different prison experience. But changes in the management of women prisoners have also been occurring elsewhere in the prison system.
- 1.14 *Report No. 36 of an Announced Inspection of Bandyup Women's Prison*⁷ (Bandyup) discussed the change that has successfully occurred at that prison to incorporate more women-centred approaches. This change is a result of commitment from management at Bandyup, a rigorous change management process, and with support from the Women's Custodial Services Directorate. *Report No. 36* also explored the concept of Bandyup as a 'hub' prison:⁸

This Office is, similarly, committed to the concept of Bandyup as a state rather than a local facility, or what the Inspectorate refers to as 'Bandyup as a hub prison'... If Bandyup Women's Prison is to embrace a truly women-centred approach to managing its (female) prisoners, Bandyup management cannot ignore the 52 female prisoners that are currently accommodated at regional prisons across Western Australia and the 49 women accommodated at Boronia Pre-release Centre (which represent roughly 20% of the entire population of female prisoners across Western Australia). This statement becomes more meaningful when one realises the extent to which female prisoners are regularly moved between Bandyup and other prisons. Managing female prisoners according to women-centred custodial practices while at Bandyup, but managing the same prisoners according to traditional (male-centred) custodial practices while they are incarcerated elsewhere in the state is a ridiculous scenario. Unfortunately, this situation currently exists and will remain so until the concept of Bandyup Women's Prison as a hub prison is acknowledged and internalised. A women-centred approach is not truly women-centred if it remains site specific. This approach should apply to individuals, rather than physical structures.

- 1.15 The same comment applies in this Report in relation to Boronia and the innovative women-centred practices that characterise the centre's operations. These are considered current best practice (certainly in Western Australia), and should therefore be replicated in other women's prisons, where practical. Indeed, this is in keeping with the Department's 'new' philosophy for women in prison that aims to 'improve services by significantly changing management systems, infrastructure and processes'.⁹

7 Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services (OICS), *Report of an Announced Inspection of Bandyup Women's Prison*, Report No. 36 (June 2006)

8 Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services (OICS), *Report of an Announced Inspection of Bandyup Women's Prison*, Report No. 36 (June 2006) 15.

9 Department of Corrective Services, (undated), *Women in Prison* brochure. Available at www.correctiveservices.wa.gov.au

- 1.16 However, the further development of women's imprisonment at Boronia and in other prisons, particularly the regional prisons will require a Head Office champion in the form of a active Women's Custodial Services Directorate. It is critical that this Directorate engage with Boronia at every opportunity. This does not mean interference at an operational level. Rather, this refers to an engagement at a higher, policy level where further new approaches and opportunities for improvement can be explored. The Inspectorate is of the opinion that this relationship needs to be actively pursued and nurtured. A constructive step in this regard would be the finalising occupancy of the substantive Superintendent position (see Chapter Two of this Report).

THE ANNOUNCED INSPECTION

Baseline Inspection

- 1.17 In keeping with the legislative requirement to inspect all custodial services managed by the Department at least once every three years, the Inspectorate is almost at the end of the second round inspection phase. The announced inspection of Roebourne Regional Prison in November 2006 heralded the commencement of the third round inspection phase for most Western Australian prisons. However, this inspection of Boronia was the centre's first inspection, given that the facility has only been operational for just over two years. Indeed, the inspection was purposely postponed until 2006 to allow the centre a 'settling in' period before being scrutinised.
- 1.18 A first inspection provides a baseline against which future performance will be assessed. However, the Inspectorate approaches all inspections within a framework of assumptions and/or expectations about a particular custodial facility. These are informed by recommendations from previous inspections (where these exist) and a process of 'continuous inspection' whereby each facility is constantly monitored through regular, but less formal, liaison visits.
- 1.19 The expectations of Boronia were high. These expectations had developed through the regular liaison visits, as well as the strong departmental claims regarding Boronia having a genuine progressive operational philosophy being implemented by a committed and enthusiastic management team. All indications suggested of an effectively functioning custodial facility driven by progressive approaches to managing women in custody.

Inspection methodology

- 1.20 The on-site inspection phase took place over a two week period from Sunday 11 June 2006 to Friday 23 June 2006. The inspection team was supported a number of external expert advisers. These experts included representatives from the Office of Health Review, the Department of Education and Training, the Western Australian Ombudsman's office, a female General Practitioner and a Child Care Consultant from Edith Cowan University. The on-site phase was extended over two weeks in order that the relatively small centre was not overwhelmed by too many inspectors at any one time. The inspection team was also divided into groups that attended the centre on alternating days in order to further minimise the impact of the inspection on the centre's daily operations.

1.21 An overall comment made by the Acting Inspector¹⁰ in the exit debrief following the completion of the on-site inspection was that Boronia was well designed, operationally functioning to a good standard and had great potential.¹¹ The more detailed inspection findings that are detailed in this Report should be read with this broad positive finding in mind.

10 Division 2 of the Inspector of Custodial Services Act 2003 provides that the Governor may appoint a person to act in the office of the Inspector in the absence of the Inspector of Custodial Services. Mr Robert Stacey was the Acting Inspector for the announced inspection of Boronia.

11 Stacey R, *Exit Debrief: Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women Inspection 11 June to 23 June 2006* (June 2006) 2.

Chapter 2

THE OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

SUMMARY

This Chapter combines inspection findings relating to resources, staffing and custody.

In relation to resources, the inspection revealed that correctional value for money at Boronia could be significantly improved by increasing the population of the centre to measure up to its operational capacity. There were many factors contributing to the low population at Boronia and these are examined in various chapters of this Report.

There are key staffing positions that need to be urgently finalised in terms of funding. These are the positions of Manager Family and Community Services and the Recreation Officer.

The inspection findings in relation to custody were positive. The Inspectorate was confident that Boronia was complying with (and in some instances exceeding) the departmental regulations in relation to custody and security. Physical security was appropriate to the minimum-security status of the centre and was complemented by sound procedural security which was backed up by sound written procedures. Dynamic security was also strength and good staff/ prisoner relations were facilitating an active intelligence gathering process.

BUILDING AND DESIGN

- 2.1 The design and layout of Boronia Pre-release Centre was congruent with the operational philosophy and enabled the prison regime to reflect life in the outside community as far as practicable whilst still maintaining adequate security for a low-security women's prison. This was primarily evident in the accommodation which provided for up to seventy women to live in domestic style housing in groups of up to five per house. Since the centre opened in 2004, considerable effort had been put into enhancing the facility. The work undertaken by the gardens and maintenance staff and the residents who work in these areas had resulted in pleasant gardens and well maintained houses that more closely resembled a well-kept suburban landscape than institutional setting. The living arrangements were all self-care in modest-sized houses that reflected the best of contemporary public housing concepts. These arrangements, reinforced by the regime requirements for living at Boronia inculcated sound house-keeping and good neighbourly behaviours which were appropriate to preparing prisoners for life in the community following release.
- 2.2 However, there was a need for improvements to the basketball court and to the urinalysis room. It was noted that Boronia's proposed capital works expenditure for the 2006/2007 financial year had provision for these two areas to be upgraded. A new basketball/netball court was to be constructed and there was a proposal for the urinalysis room to be re-designed and staff to be consulted regarding the new design. The taking of urinalysis samples was undertaken in a small cleaning room that was simply not fit for purpose. The Inspectorate anticipates that given the intrusive nature of urine tests that they will eventually be replaced with less invasive measures such as saliva testing. The Department should continue to monitor developments in and around these alternative methods.

THE OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

- 2.3 The remainder of the capital works budget was scheduled to be used for minor works that was required to repair or complete outstanding works from the initial construction. The capital works budget for Boronia in fact comprised the money remaining from the initial building budget and no new budget had been provided. Even though Boronia was a new facility, it would be remiss of the Department to fail to provide a capital works budget to Boronia in future years, as the physical infrastructure will certainly deteriorate without adequate maintenance and renewal. It was important that management at Boronia plan future enhancements and develop well structured and supported budget bids. Failure to effectively plan for these enhancements would almost certainly compromise the capacity of Boronia to maintain its current high standard of accommodation and facilities.
- 2.4 The centre had a maintenance plan in place that involved the regular systematic checking of all residences, and conducting minor repairs on-site. There did, however, appear to be opportunities for including more residents in the maintenance plan. As a of key focus of the centre was to provide and promote a normalised living arrangements, small maintenance jobs within a communal living house should be carried out by the residents where practicable, thus increasing their skill base as well as promoting 'normal' living circumstances. This would provide valuable opportunities for skilling and employment for residents and the Vocational Support Officers.¹²

VALUE FOR MONEY

- 2.5 The cost per resident per day at Boronia was \$324.69. The average cost per day for the entire prisoner population (in 2004/05) was \$239.10.¹³ Boronia was well above the average.
- 2.6 Although this may not have reflected good correctional value for money, it was acknowledged that the costs of a centre such as Boronia may be higher than those incurred in more traditional facilities, and that these higher costs were in part based upon a higher level of service being provided.
- 2.7 However, the major contributing factor to the poor value for the custodial dollar was the lack of residents in the centre. Boronia had the capacity to house 70 residents, and, if it was at capacity, the cost per resident per day would reduce to approximately \$231.92, thus providing much better value for money. Boronia's average population over two years of operation had been 46, ranging from 36 to 55.
- 2.8 It is important that the Department look closely at processes and assessment classifications with the aim of increasing the number of prisoners transferred to Boronia. The Inspectorate understood that the centre had sufficient custodial staff for a full complement of 70 residents, thus additional staffing would not be required to support the increase in residents. The Inspection found the processes to be transparent and accountable whereby women were assessed under the current classification system as suitable for placement at Boronia. The key

12 It is, however, acknowledged that there are jobs at Boronia that would require the use of external contract traders.

13 Department of Justice, Annual Report 2004/2005, p. 151.

THE OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

issue then was to determine alternative strategies for increasing the population. These could include:

- Review the classification system within a women-centred framework to ensure the system is appropriate and does not over classify women.¹⁴
- Bring women in the regions to Boronia for short stays. (Many women in the regions serve custodial terms in highly cramped and unsuitable conditions. Some may be interested in staying at Boronia for a period of their sentence if they are assured that they can return to their home country.)
- Increased use of over ride facilities for medium-security women.

- 2.9 The budget provided for the 2005/2006 financial year was insufficient for the needs of the centre. The centre requested additional funding for the 2006/2007 financial year. The approach in terms of allocating funding for a centre such as Boronia was based on the assumption that low security equals low correctional cost. This was not an accurate assumption: the 'low risk' nature of Boronia's population did not translate into 'low need'. On the contrary, correctional policies in releasing centres need to focus on rehabilitation and re-entry, and intensive, targeted services are required to support these aims.
- 2.10 It was imperative that the centre be funded adequately to provide the services required. Correctional value for money would increase as the population increased. Providing the correct budget and increasing the population would allow Boronia to continue to develop as a best practice model of correctional services for women.

Recommendation 1

There must be a supportive relationship between the Director of Women's Custodial Services and the centre management. This must also extend to support for an adequate allocation of funding for the centre to enable it to meet the high needs of its prisoner population and to develop new initiatives.

STAFFING MATTERS

- 2.11 There were gaps in some of the administrative staffing positions at Boronia. Most notably, the substantive occupation of the Superintendent position and funding for the position of Manager Family and Community Services were yet to be finalised at the time of the inspection in June 2006.
- 2.12 The current Superintendent at Boronia was acting in the position – and had been acting in the position for longer than the original, substantive Superintendent actually worked in the position. This was an untenable situation. A new centre such as Boronia, with its contemporary philosophy and regimes cannot afford any instability at senior management level. Consistent improvement, in any organisation, depends on there being someone responsible and accountable for it. This was not to say that the current acting Superintendent had not managed the centre as if she were the substantive occupant of the leadership position; indeed she had

14 See Recommendation 14 in Chapter Five, *Rehabilitation*, for a recommendation in this regard.

THE OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

performed remarkably well considering the instability of her position that kept being rolled over every three to six months.

- 2.13 Likewise, the position of Manager Family and Community Services must be finalised. This position was essential for Boronia to continue to achieve its objectives in relation to the importance of family relationships, as well as to ensure that the needs of mothers and children in the centre are met.
- 2.14 Funding for the Manager Family and Community Services position had been redirected from the Recreation Officer position. This was also an untenable situation because both positions were required for Boronia to continue to develop. At the time of the inspection, the Recreation Officer position was unfilled and the Section 94 Officer and volunteers were ‘filling the gap’. Recreation activities were also being coordinated by the Volunteer Coordinator, which placed a burden on her existing workload. This left the centre vulnerable to gaps in service delivery as the majority of volunteers were students who were unavailable during the university holidays. This situation also directly reduced Section 94 external activities. At the time of inspection the Section 94 Officer participated in the coordination of some recreational activities, at the expense of increasing and developing the Section 94 activities undertaken by the centre. This was inappropriate given the significance of a Section 94 program in a pre-release centre such as Boronia.

Recommendation 2

- i. Key positions that remain unfunded at Boronia must be finalised at the earliest opportunity. This recommendation relates specifically to the positions of Manager Family and Community Services, and Recreation Officer.*
- ii. In addition, the position of Superintendent must be filled substantively.*

- 2.15 The Inspectorate was dissatisfied with the night shift staffing level at Boronia. A three person shift was insufficient to adequately monitor the centre. Moreover, this would be particularly inadequate in the event of a medical emergency in which an officer is required to escort or accompany a resident out of the centre for medical (or other emergency) purposes. This was clearly not acceptable, and, although staff were available to cover these shift shortages on overtime, this should only be considered a temporary measure.
- 2.16 The Inspectorate was satisfied that the mix of male and female staff at Boronia was appropriate. The staff at Boronia also considered the gender balance to be reasonable and felt strongly that Boronia should not be a ‘female only’ site in terms of staffing. It was revealed during the inspection, however, that there were times when no female staff were present on-site. Again, this was most likely to occur during the night shift. This is not appropriate because of the increased risk to the safety of the female residents, and the risk to male staff of allegations of improper behaviour. A lack of female staff on duty would compromise the centre’s capacity to strip-search a resident, if it were required. This was a situation which needed to be addressed and this Office would advise against regular all-male shifts, particularly on night shift.

Recommendation 3

The centre should undertake a review of the night staffing arrangements and ensure that the centre is sufficiently staffed at all times. This review should include an analysis of gender patterns of the staffing rosters at Boronia.

Training

- 2.17 Officers who had expressed an interest in working at Boronia had undergone specific training to work in the centre. Officers said that they appreciated the benefits of this training and suggested that all new officers to Boronia should be similarly trained. Certainly, Boronia was a complex environment in which to work. The complexity was derived in part from the needs of the population (women in custody should be managed differently to male prisoners), and the nature of the facility, that is a pre-release centre with all the resources and services that a pre-release centre requires. In terms of the demands on staff, a minimum-security prison does not equate to minimum effort. This is a misperception on the part of some prison officers who are unfamiliar with the complexities of Boronia. The Inspection found that staff at Boronia were committed to providing one-on-one attention to prisoners where it was necessary and were to be commended for the respectful nature of their relations with prisoners.
- 2.18 Staff expressed the belief that custodial staff applying to work at the centre should only be accepted if they had a thorough understanding and wide experience in dealing with prisoners, along with prison security and emergency procedures. This was because the close nature of the relationships that exist between staff and residents at Boronia were demanding of staff and required a clear understanding of boundaries as well as being alert to ‘grooming’ behaviours – behaviour that may be quite subtle, yet highly manipulative and exploitative. The danger for inexperienced staff was that they may not realise what is happening.¹⁵
- 2.19 Both custodial and non-custodial staff felt that preliminary and ongoing training in boundary setting and grooming was required for staff at Boronia. However, formal recognition of the dangers of inappropriate boundaries should also have been included in local policy statements. While the Inspection found no examples of inappropriate relationships between staff and prisoners there was an ongoing need for vigilance in this area.

Recommendation 4

Ongoing training and information about grooming and boundary setting should form part of Boronia’s staff training schedule. This should be supported by robust policies that stipulate the appropriate levels of interactions between staff and residents at Boronia.

15 Much of the literature on grooming behaviours refers to online grooming by child sex predators. Visit <http://www.aic.gov.au/topics/cybercrime/children.html> for papers related to grooming behaviours.

Staff interactions

- 2.20 One of the most pleasant aspects of Boronia was the level of staff satisfaction and engagement with the centre. Staff reported across all levels and in all areas that they enjoyed working at Boronia, that they were proud of the centre and what it was achieving, and that they felt engaged in the various management processes. Staff consistently reported that they felt that they had open lines of communication with management, who listened to their comments and provided feedback. Staff believed that the management team were committed to the smooth running of the centre, and constantly sought out opportunities for improvement. Both custodial and non-custodial staff were found to understand the roles that each played within the centre, and we observed a degree of respect between these two groups not often observed in other custodial settings.
- 2.21 In the pre-inspection survey of the custodial staff, strong leadership and good relations between staff were rated amongst the best things about working at Boronia. Similarly, all of the prisoners that participated in the pre-inspection focus groups commented that they were treated with respect by staff, and most commented that this was one of the best things about being at Boronia.

CUSTODY: A MULTI-FACETED APPROACH

- 2.22 The following aspects of security was inspected:
1. Physical Security – relating to the architecture of prison buildings, internal barriers and the specifications of the perimeter systems.
 2. Procedural Security – relating predominantly to various circumstances of counts and searches.
 3. Dynamic Security – relating to structured activities for prisoners and intelligence, which depend upon alert staff that constantly interact with prisoners.
- 2.23 While all three forms of security should be evident to a greater or lesser extent in all prison regimes, physical security assumes a greater importance in maximum-security prisons, involving a concomitant increase in institutionally imposed control. At the other end of the security range, the management of prisoners in open or minimum-security facilities should place greater reliance on procedural and dynamic security, and should allow more opportunities for self-control within rules.
- 2.24 At Boronia, there was a high level of self-control exercised by prisoners that was consistent with minimum-security and with the centre's philosophy, which in part required that the female prisoners assume similar responsibilities to those that they would face once released. The inspection team examined the balance between physical, procedural, and dynamic security, and found that the balance between these three strategies was adequately maintained. This finding should increase community confidence that security was being appropriately managed at Boronia.

- 2.25 The perimeter security was provided via a fence with a remote controlled vehicle access gate, and a typical office style reception area that controlled all pedestrian access. While the fence was less of a barrier than fences recently installed at the male minimum-security prison farms at Karnet and Wooroloo, it was well supported by electronic detection devices, closed circuit cameras and adequate night lighting. All of these security strategies were coordinated through a 24 hour security control room and, in context, were considered both adequate and appropriate.
- 2.26 Boronia is situated in the middle of a busy business, academic and residential precinct, and the building, the height and type of fencing, landscaping and car parking were designed to blend into the area and support the concept of the centre being part of the community. The close proximity to the neighbouring buildings and streets means, however, that the perimeter is vulnerable to external threats such as 'drug drops'. This vulnerability had been acknowledged by the prison management team, and a vigorous procedural security regime supported by a high level of dynamic security had been effected to deter and detect such events and maintain the security of the centre. The inspection team was also advised that planning for regular liaison meetings with local external security personnel had commenced.

Procedural Security

- 2.27 The procedural security arrangements involved a coordinated approach with respect to a number of discreet tasks (or procedures) that occurred regularly and in accordance with various relevant local and/or standing orders. These included:

- Perimeter tests;
- Daily checks of the electronic security systems – the swipe card key system and the electronic key handover system;
- Population counts;
- Weekly searches of the residents' rooms and communal areas;
- Appropriate drug and alcohol testing by means of urine and breath analysis;
- Active monitoring of telephone calls and incoming and outgoing mail; and
- A regime for searching and monitoring prisoners, including those on a Section 94 program.

All of these procedures either met or exceeded the standards set by the Department and were found to be adequate and appropriate.

- 2.28 All people entering the prison in a professional capacity (such as contractors, program and education facilitators/tutors, and other service providers) were each issued with identification cards and personal duress alarms. Test activation of the duress system during the on-site phase of the inspection resulted in an immediate response by multiple officers.
- 2.29 The security regime for social visits was focused on the residents rather than the visitors. The visits area had separate toilet facilities for visitors and residents allowing a visitor to make use of the toilet facilities during a visit without the visit having to be terminated, which is what often

occurs at many other prisons. Any suspicious activity that is observed during a social visit resulted in a search or test of the prisoner rather than the visitor. This was appropriate for a minimum-security prison, although the right to search visitors was reserved.

- 2.30 There were clear and detailed local and standing orders supporting all the abovementioned procedural security and control matters that also provided comprehensive role responsibilities. The potential for security to be breached was likely to be deterred or detected expeditiously.

Dynamic Security

- 2.31 Dynamic security was also being effectively harnessed to detect and respond to threats to security and order, and was evident in all aspects of the centre's operations. An internal house telephone system operated to enable simple communications between residents and staff, and provided after hours emergency access point for residents to contact staff.
- 2.32 Relationships between residents and staff were observed and reported to be both positive and respectful, and all residents reported that they felt safe. In the pre-inspection survey of custodial staff at Boronia, 94 per cent of those who responded confirmed that the quality of interactions between staff and residents was 'very good'. Similarly, pre-inspection focus groups that were conducted with residents at Boronia revealed that residents felt respected and well-treated by staff.
- 2.33 Both staff and residents agreed that the high quality of the interactions between staff and residents meant that any disagreements, conflicts or complaints about staff were negotiated within the context of these interactions and did not require external intervention for a resolution. This applied to both male and female staff.
- 2.34 The nature of the relations between staff and residents reflected and was a reflection of the open, 'relaxed' but business-like atmosphere that pervaded the centre. This was both refreshing and appropriate to a pre-release environment. The inspection team found that residents expressed appreciation at being able to serve a portion of their sentence at Boronia and the regime privileges were effective incentives for compliance with centre rules.

Chapter 3

CARE AND WELLBEING

SUMMARY

Overall, the inspection findings in relation to the care and wellbeing were favourable. Residents arriving at Boronia for the first time were appropriately received and oriented, although the inspection uncovered an omission on the Department's electronic orientation checklist, which has subsequently been assessed for change across the prison system.

Social contact between residents and their friends/families was actively encouraged and the facilities for visitors were exceptional. Recreation activities were diverse, although the coordination of these activities was largely dependent on the availability of volunteers – this was an unsustainable situation.

The regime at Boronia provided a constructive day of women-centred activities. The health centre was a model of good practice for the provision of health services in a custodial environment, and services were comprehensive, in relation to primary health care as well as health promotion and education. In this regard, the anti-smoking campaign was a commendable initiative.

As is often the case, food caused the biggest stir among the residents during the inspection. However, it was not any shortcomings in centrally prepared food that caused complaint (residents prepared their own meals) but rather the unique system of regulating food purchases through a colour coding of food items in the supermarket.

THE QUALITY OF PRISON LIFE AT BORONIA

- 3.1 The living environment at Boronia went a long way to ensuring the care and wellbeing of residents (as well as their preparation for release). The physical design of the centre assisted in 'de-institutionalising' prisoners and facilitated an active self-directed lifestyle that replicated outside living, as far as practicable. Each house was allocated a budget, dependent on the number of residents in the house. The budget was used for basic living expenses, primarily food and household necessities. These items were purchased through a supermarket that was located on-site, the operation of which is discussed in more detail below.

ARRIVING AT BORONIA

- 3.2 The inspection found that the processes for receiving and orienting a new resident into Boronia constituted good practice. Standing Order B5 was the local policy that directed these processes. The Standing Order assumed that prisoners arriving at Boronia would have had some form of orientation, at least to the general prison system. The reception and orientation processes were consequently focused on orienting residents to the centre, and the arrangements, routines and expectations unique to the centre. Each new arrival was required to sign a 'Memorandum of Understanding for Placement at Boronia Pre-release Centre'. This memorandum clearly outlined the four guiding principles of Boronia and

required that the new resident sign the form as an acknowledgement and acceptance of these principles. This form also described the consequences of failing to comply with the memorandum once it had been signed by the resident.

- 3.3 The Peer Support Team was actively involved in the orientation process. Once the official reception procedures had been completed, a Peer Support Team member guided the new resident on a tour of the centre during which she provided information about the available services, the living arrangements, where to go for help, and so on. The Peer Support Team members alternated these orientation responsibilities.
- 3.4 All new residents were required to complete an orientation feedback questionnaire two weeks after being admitted to the centre. This questionnaire was both an audit of the actual reception and orientation processes, as well as an assessment of the new resident's knowledge of the facility that should have been gained during the orientation process. This feedback exposed any gaps in the reception and orientation processes as well as any information gaps the resident may have. Each new resident was required to view the 'Orientation to Boronia' video as part of the orientation process. This video was also played each Saturday morning through the centre's video system. These aspects of the reception and orientation processes contributed to what was a good practice model.
- 3.5 The orientation process for new residents at Boronia should begin at Bandyup Women's Prison as this is the principal reception, remand, assessment and sentenced maximum-security prison for women in Western Australia. Bandyup was consequently, the principal 'feeder' prison for Boronia. The two facilities, therefore were dependent upon each other but represented different ends of the custodial security spectrum. This incongruity became apparent during the pre-inspection focus groups when many of the residents at Boronia reported that they had felt exposed, vulnerable and quite frightened when they first arrived at Boronia from Bandyup. The contrast between the more relaxed atmosphere at Boronia and the maximum-security, razor wire fences, and strict movement control they had become accustomed to at Bandyup had clearly often made for a difficult period of adjustment.
- 3.6 Bandyup Women's Prison had assigned one of the self-care units to be a 'Transitional Unit' for the transition from Bandyup to Boronia. The women in this unit were required to take responsibility for their own living arrangements, just as they would do at Boronia. However, the announced inspection of Bandyup Women's Prison in May 2005 found some problems with the effectiveness of this transition process, and this was the subject of a recommendation in the report of that inspection.¹⁶ This situation had subsequently worsened because of the renovations to the self-care units at Bandyup. The 'Transition Unit' had reverted to a normal self-care unit in order to accommodate the long-term self-care residents at Bandyup, while the renovations were being completed.

16 Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services (OICS), *Report of an Announced Inspection of Bandyup Women's Prison*, Report No. 36 (June 2006) 15.

- 3.7 The issues that were raised in the recent Bandyup report in relation to the synchronicity of the orientation process between Bandyup and Boronia are re-emphasised in this Report. Orientation for life at Boronia should commence at Bandyup and should be part of a formal orientation process. In the past Boronia staff attended Bandyup to provide information to prisoners about life at Boronia. This had ceased but the practice should be resumed as part of an improved transition process.¹⁷
- 3.8 Notwithstanding favourable comments about the reception and orientation processes at Boronia, the inspection did expose a significant gap in the TOMS orientation checklist.¹⁸ There was no option on this checklist whereby a new prisoner's understanding of the grievance processes could be assessed. This finding emerged in response to general findings about information relating to grievance processes at Boronia. The Inspectorate invited a representative from the Western Australia State Ombudsman's office to inspect the processes at Boronia whereby residents were able to complain about any aspect of life at Boronia. This included complaints to external organisations, such as the Ombudsman's office, Office of Health Review, ministerial agencies, and the Inspectorate. The Ombudsman's representative found that there was insufficient information available at Boronia about the role of the Ombudsman's office and this finding was immediately conveyed to the centre management, which in turn prompted senior management at Boronia to remedy this situation immediately. This uncovered the fact that there were no questions about prisoners' understanding of grievance processes on the TOMS checklist. This was a significant finding and was a system wide deficiency. Action has already been taken at a Head Office level to adjust the checklist on TOMS to include reference to grievance processes.

THE STRUCTURED DAY

- 3.9 The structured day at Boronia officially began at 8.30 am and ended at 3.30 pm. The structured day incorporated the following activities:¹⁹
- Work contributing to the operational functioning of the centre;
 - Community and voluntary activities off-site (referred to as Section 94 activities);
 - Education and training;
 - Programs;
 - Mother and child activities;
 - Prison Industries;
 - External Catering; and
 - External Contract Work.

17 See Recommendation 28 in *Report No. 36 of an Announced Inspection of Bandyup Women's Prison* (June 2006).

18 This is an electronic checklist that is part of the Total Offender Management System (TOMS) that officers are required to complete for every person being received into a prison.

19 Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women, Local Order 11.

- 3.10 However, the inspection found that other activities such as visits, health appointments, and authorised absences were also given recognition as legitimate activities. All residents were required (under Local Order 11) to be engaged in at least one of the activities listed above each morning and afternoon, unless granted permission by a case officer to do otherwise. In the event of a resident falling ill and not being able to attend work, a medical certificate is required. The Memorandum of Understanding that each new resident was required to sign committed each resident to maintaining full-time employment.²⁰
- 3.12 The structured day at Boronia was highly constructive and relevant to the women held there. Mothers who were responsible for the full-time care of resident children were considered to be engaged in full-time employment and were being paid a gratuity. Mothers with children residing with them also had access to childcare in the community which allowed them time out from parenting as well as the opportunity to engage in activities in the centre, such as programs, education or recreation activities.

FOOD AND HOSPITALITY

The Kitchen

- 3.13 The centre's kitchen, supermarket and café are co-located and adjoin the indoor and outdoor family visiting areas. The equipment and general facilities in the kitchen were of a high standard. The kitchen was staffed by two qualified chefs and had a workforce of approximately 12 residents. Many of the residents working in the kitchen, Supermarket and/or café were involved in hospitality traineeships.²¹ This work and training was aligned to contemporary post-release employment opportunities. A card payment system had been introduced whereby visitors and residents could purchase items from the café using a card that had been credited with funds. The card system also facilitated the payment for items from the supermarket or café and provided the opportunity for residents to increase their familiarity with the sophisticated modern electronic billing systems that have become a requirement in an increasingly technical and sophisticated job market.

The Supermarket and Canteen

- 3.14 The supermarket and canteen were co-located in the same 'shop' with the supermarket providing a more normalised shopping experience. Residents purchased items from the supermarket or the canteen using separate cards: the supermarket card was credited with funds allocated by the centre, and was used as the household budget card. Items purchased with this card were for communal/household use. Residents with children in the centre could also purchase essential consumable and other items needed for their children using the household budget funds. Residents' canteen cards were credited with the gratuity they received based on their participation in structured day activities. Residents were not permitted to purchase canteen items with their household cards and, likewise, were not permitted to purchase household items with their canteen cards.

20 Boronia Pre-release Centre, Standing Order B5, Appendix 1, *Memorandum of Understanding for Placement at Boronia Pre-release Centre*.

21 Traineeships are discussed in further detail in the chapter on Reparation

- 3.15 The household budget amount depended on the number of residents residing in a house. Each household had its budget updated every day on the prison-wide computer system, except on weekends. The budget ranged from \$8 per person per day for one person living alone in a house to \$5 per person per day for five people sharing a house. Different houses were allocated different days for shopping at the supermarket.
- 3.15 All the food items in the supermarket were colour coded red, orange or green, a system that had been in place since the centre opened. Prior to the establishment of the canteen and supermarket, a list of food items that were to be stocked in the supermarket was sent to the Department of Health. Nutritional experts were asked to colour code all the items into the three colour groups in keeping with Department of Health guidelines on nutrition and healthy eating standards. The table below represents a snapshot of the food items in each colour category.

COLOUR CATEGORY	CONSUMABLES
Red	Sauces, oils (including olive oil), minced garlic, ginger and chilli, liquid and powdered flavoured stocks, spices, some cereals and muesli, vegemite, tea, coffee, honey and jams.
Orange	Eggs, milk, tuna (in oil or brine), nuts, citrus peel, peanut butter
Green	Fruit, vegetables, canned vegetables, canned fruit (in sweetened or natural juices), baked beans, lentils, cous cous, flour, some cereals and muesli

- 3.16 The items coded 'red' were those that had the least healthy benefits and were, therefore, the items that were most restricted. Residents were only allowed to spend 10 per cent of their total consumable spending bill on red items. Thus if a resident spent \$20 on food/ consumable items other than those in the red group, she may spend 10 per cent of that amount (\$2) on red items. The resident may save her 10 per cent quota over a five day period (Monday to Friday).
- 3.17 The red items were the main source of controversy amongst the residents. They generally reported the standards to be too rigid and did not think that standard items like tea and spices should be in the 'red'. Further, they found it difficult to save enough to be able to purchase these items over a five day period. Residents reported that this has resulted in them buying 'green' items in excess of what they actually needed or used in order to spend enough to increase the 10 per cent quota. Much of the excess green items (fruit and vegetables primarily) were inevitably wasted as a result. This was an unfortunate side effect of an obviously well-intentioned but ultimately unsustainable system.

- 3.18 The Inspectorate supported the principle behind the colour coding system in the supermarket as it clearly was intended to teach the women about healthy and non-healthy food choices. This was a laudable aim for a population that otherwise might have had little if any guidance in this regard, and whose habits in relation to taking care of themselves were often less than optimal. The system was being supported by information and awareness raising strategies about maintaining good health through nutrition. The Inspectorate also supported the overall concept of self determination that the supermarket and budgeting system at Boronia afforded. Indeed, the Acting Inspector commented that ‘the approach was based upon a good community model and was sound’.²²
- 3.19 However, it would seem that the colour coding system needs fine tuning. The Acting Inspector suggested a ‘local review to introduce a more flexible system’.²³

Recommendation 5

The placement of the food items in the colour coding system in the supermarket should be reviewed as part of Boronia’s commitment to continuous improvement.

- 3.20 Some residents complained that canteen items were also restricted, and some popular items had been removed from the canteen list because it was believed that residents were purchasing too many of these items on their canteen spends. These concerns should be addressed in the recommended review.

The Café

- 3.21 The café in the visits centre catered for residents and visitors during visits sessions on the weekends, and for staff and official visitors at all times. The café operated on the same electronic card payment system as the supermarket and canteen. Visitors could also purchase cards for use in the café by means of a ‘vending’ machine that was located in the entry to the facility.
- 3.22 The café was a significant achievement for Boronia that was much appreciated by staff and residents alike. The café increased the training opportunities for residents and provided one of centre’s more outstanding features. However, the Inspection found that café could be further improved and along with it, training options maximised with the installation of a café-style coffee machine.

The café, which is a multipurpose facility that also serves as the visits centre was highly praised and valued by all. The absence of a coffee-making machine is slightly disappointing given that the café sells products to visitors and some staff and there are missed prisoner training opportunities. The machine would probably pay for itself in a matter of months and become a valued prison asset and an acknowledged privilege.²⁴

22 Stacey R, *Exit Debrief: Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women Inspection 11 June to 23 June 2006* (June 2006) 6.

23 Stacey R, *Exit Debrief: Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women Inspection 11 June to 23 June 2006* (June 2006) 6.

24 Ibid, p.6.

ASSOCIATION

Recreation

- 3.23 The diversity of the recreation program at Boronia had meant that a wide range of recreation activities had been available, including bingo, karaoke, volleyball and dancing lessons. The coordination of most of these activities, however, had been dependent on volunteers, particularly student volunteers from the neighbouring Curtin University. At the time of the inspection, the students were on holiday and this resulted in the recreation program going into recess.
- 3.24 The reliance on volunteers to coordinate activities was innovative, given the lack of funding for a Recreation Officer, but was unsustainable in the long-term. Similarly, in Chapter Four of this Report the use of volunteers to coordinate parenting programs was found to be unsustainable for the same reason – as the programs stopped when the volunteers were not available.²⁵
- 3.25 The Acting Inspector commented that recreation ...
- ... is an essential component of health and wellbeing and a core element of the constructive day framework. The funding must be secured and the service provided on a sustainable basis. Volunteers should complement the service delivery rather than being used to substitute for the under-funding evident in this case.²⁶
- 3.26 Earlier in this Report, the untenable situation that had deprived Boronia of a funded Recreation Officer position was noted and it was recommended that the Department ensure funding for the position (recommendation 2).

Social Contact

- 3.27 Maintaining contact between the residents and their friends and family was a priority for the centre, and the effort the centre had invested in facilitating such contact was commendable. The family-friendly environment of the visiting centre and a flexible approach to managing social visits were the mainstays of this strategy.²⁷
- 3.28 The visiting centre had both indoor and outdoor activity areas set aside for children. At the weekends when the visiting facilities were most heavily used, the indoor area was supervised by a child care worker from Outcare, who also provided and participated in activities such as painting.²⁸ The level of supervision in this indoor area was appropriate with rules enforced to prevent running inside and a requirement that shoes be worn at all times.
- 3.29 The outdoor entertainment area for children was a fenced off, soft surface play area that contained fixed play equipment for children. Children were not allowed to take food or drinks into this area, and there was a sign to this effect on the fence. The inspection team

25 See paragraph 4.40.

26 Stacey R, *Exit Debrief: Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women Inspection 11 June to 23 June 2006* (June 2006)

27 Social visits sessions occur on weekends and public holidays, with two hour sessions available in the morning and in the afternoon. Visitors are required to book a session at least 24 hours before the visit is to take place.

28 Outcare is the agency that provides support to the families of the residents.

observed this area to be well utilised, raising concern that the supervision levels in this outside area were inadequate and there was consequently a danger that some children might be hurt. The Inspection observed a lot of children in the area at times climbing and playing on the equipment with very little supervision. Further, the ages of the children using the equipment ranged from very young toddlers to much older and bigger children.

- 3.30 The information booklet that was available for visitors did caution visitors that the children that accompany them to a visit remain their responsibility at all times and must, therefore, be supervised at all times. However, it could not be assumed that all visitors had read and/or understood the information booklet.
- 3.31 This concern was raised with the centre management during the on-site inspection. It was suggested that, at the very least, there should be a sign on the fence stipulating that children were to be supervised at all times, and the Inspection was given assurances that action would be taken in this regard. Further, the centre should ensure that only those children of appropriate age and/or weight categories that the equipment can withstand are able to use the equipment.
- 3.32 On the weekend prior to the major part of the on-site phase of the Inspection, the social visits were observed to be flexibly managed to accommodate arising needs. On that day, a special visit had been arranged for a resident due to a recent death in the family. The visit was scheduled outside the normal session times to accommodate a larger number of visitors than would otherwise be allowed for one resident.
- 3.34 The Acting Inspector commended Boronia's adaptability in this regard, noting also the practice of allowing visitors and residents to resume a visit subsequent to using toilet facilities:

The usual suspicion that this compromises drug strategies has not been found to be justified at Boronia. This is an example of good practice that other prisons could well emulate.²⁹

Telephones were another essential means by which prisoners maintained contact with their families. The inspection found there were an adequate number of telephones available to residents but the design of the telephone booths was problematic in as much as prisoners were exposed to the weather when making calls. Their distribution and style were however, consistent with a community model and should be preserved.

HEALTH SERVICES

The Health Centre

- 3.35 The expectation in relation to the provision of health services in a custodial environment was that these must be of an equivalent standard to that of a normal community setting. This inspection assumption that was tested by the inspection team's health expert, a (female) General Practitioner (GP).

29 Stacey R, *Exit Debrief: Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women Inspection 11 June to 23 June 2006* (June 2006)

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- 3.36 Medical services to women in prison must first address the fact that women prisoners have poor health relative to women in the general community. In particular, women in custody have had a high incidence of chronic illnesses (such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes and hepatitis), mental health problems, physical and mental illnesses arising from substance use, and gynaecological problems. They have also been more likely to have had a past history of sexual, physical, and emotional abuse.³⁰
- 3.37 Health services had a philosophy of normalisation and preparation for release. The health centre aimed to simulate health care in the community, where practicable. It also aimed to improve the residents' general health with a special focus on women's health issues, illness prevention and health promotion including encouraging better self-care. The centre also provided health services to the children living there.
- 3.38 The Health Centre was located in a modern and well designed building that was sufficiently spacious and had wheelchair access. The facility was well-equipped with appropriate and good quality equipment. The inspection team's GP found that health services were of an excellent standard. The facility and equipment were well maintained, relations between staff and residents were discreet and cordial, and the necessary record-keeping and dispensing procedures were consistent with good community practice.
- 3.39 The residents generally reaffirmed satisfaction with the health service available at the centre. This is unusual in custodial facilities in Western Australia, whether male or female. Residents particularly commented favourably about the quality of service and the approach of the staff. Those residents who had children either residing with them at the centre or attending for an extended stay were also satisfied that their children could receive adequate medical attention should this be necessary. Health centre staff and residents both stated that they felt the medical centre was a safe environment to work in and one in which people were treated with respect.
- 3.40 The centre operated from 8 am to 4 pm. Monday to Friday for regular nursing services, and from 8 am to 2 pm on weekends and public holidays for emergencies and the dispensing of medication only. Outside of these times there were no nurses on-site. An appointment system was in place and appointments were arranged through a full-time receptionist. Two female GPs attended for one or two half-day sessions per week depending on the number of patient bookings, and their own availability. There was no provision for 24 hour nursing care on-site. If this was required, the resident would be transferred to Bandyup Women's Prison for medical monitoring. The resident would only be transferred back to Boronia when she no longer required intensive medical care. This could be disruptive for the residents, but was consistent with a community service and was used only as a last resort.
- 3.41 The range of the health services that were provided was excellent. Not only were services comprehensive, they were also specifically women-centred, and many had a health promotion focus. This was consistent with the guiding philosophy that emphasised personal

30 Salomone, J (undated) *Towards Best Practice in Women's Corrections: The Western Australian Low Security Prison for Women*. Department of Justice

responsibility. Apart from the basic health services, the following services were also available for residents at Boronia:

- A child health nurse ran a regular clinic at the centre and provided routine health checks and vaccinations for residents' children as well as assisting with parenting issues.
- Once a month a Gastroenterologist attended to run a Hepatitis C clinic. This provided access to the latest treatment options (at the time of the inspection there were six residents receiving treatment for Hepatitis C). The Nurse Manager had liaised with these residents' workplaces to have Mondays off due to the side effects of treatment, and this had not affected their gratuity.
- A masseuse attended weekly when required (residents pay for this).
- The Mental Health Nurse (MHN) from Bandyup attended one afternoon per week providing continuity of care for those residents transferred from Bandyup. Residents could access the psychiatrists at Bandyup, and there was provision for postnatal psychiatric care through King Edward Memorial Hospital.
- An extensive education and health promotion program that was well supported by management and well received by both staff and residents.

3.42 Appointments with external specialist health care service providers were organised when necessary and included: podiatrists, dentists, physiotherapists, optometrists, as well as X-rays and pathology tests. The centre was flexible in facilitating these external appointments, although some residents expressed concern that the event of their child having to leave the centre to attend a medical appointment, they (as the mother) was not always able to accompany the child, and would usually be required to sign the child out to a carer who would accompany the child to the appointment. This process appeared inconsistent with the centre's emphasis on the connection between mothers and their children, and with the requirement for residents to take personal responsibility for decisions and events that affect them and their children. The inspection team heard conflicting accounts of this process with some residents commenting that they had been allowed to accompany their child to an external medical appointment. This reflects a haphazard system that is more dependent on variable circumstances, such as particular staff on duty at the time, than a formal procedure.

Recommendation 6

Mothers with children residing with them at Boronia should be allowed to accompany their child/ children to their child's external medical appointment as a matter of course. This should occur in all instances and be a documented formal procedure.

3.43 Finally, discharge preparations for residents being released were comprehensive. Residents left with a week's supply of essential medication, and appointments would be scheduled for community services, such as family planning and mental health services. Specialist letters (as appropriate) and health summaries were also provided to the resident. These discharge procedures were good practice in preparing residents for successful reintegration into the community.

Boronia's Anti-Smoking Campaign

- 3.44 The health promotion efforts that had been invested in the anti-smoking campaign at the centre were impressive, and deserving of a specific mention in this Report. Boronia's aim in this regard has been to be the first completely non-smoking custodial facility in Western Australia, for both staff and residents.
- 3.45 The campaign has been well-supported by both staff and residents, as at July 2006, a quarter of the residents were engaged in the no smoking campaign and all except two staff members had given up smoking. The two staff members who still smoked had substantially reduced the amount of cigarettes they smoked each day, and were in the process of trialling various techniques to assist them to stop smoking completely.
- 3.46 The campaign had been implemented in anticipation of a prison-wide smoking ban. Whilst there had been no official directive in relation to smoking in prisons, the recent changes to the smoking laws in public areas such as bars and nightclubs was taken as indicative of a political trend towards much stricter controls on smoking in the community.³¹
- 3.47 Encouragement to give up smoking was supported nicotine patches and 'Quit packs' that were made available free of charge through the health centre. As part of the health centre's promotion activities, information sessions on the detrimental effects of smoking and strategies for dealing with giving up and the associated effects (such as weight gain) had been presented. The supermarket also limited the amount of cigarettes a resident could buy each week.
- 3.48 The Inspectorate was impressed by the depth of this campaign and the success evident already. Importantly, the centre was cognizant of the need for a balance to be maintained between limiting the residences choices and staying true to the guiding principle of 'personal responsibility' that places the onus on the residents to make their own choices, where practicable
- 3.49 Until such time as the smoking regime changes across the prison system as a whole, Boronia should continue to allow some space for personal choice in this area whilst also pursuing its laudable policy of helping residents quit nicotine altogether.

Prison Counselling Service (PCS)

- 3.50 There was a PCS attendance at Boronia three days a week. Although PCS had been available since the centre opened, this service was at first only intermittent, there being no dedicated prison counsellor specifically for Boronia. This situation had changed and the current counsellor had been attending regularly for approximately 12 months.

31 The relevant legislation is the recently proclaimed *Tobacco Products Control Act 2006*.

- 3.51 Provision of a counselling service was an integral component of the rehabilitation process. The service provided a link to other agencies that provided specialist counselling services, such as Holyoake, Cyrenian House, and Sexual Assault Referral Centre. Relationship counselling was also facilitated for a nominal fee by an outside agency that attended the centre.
- 3.52 The PCS counsellor reported that the centre provided a full caseload that warranted additional PCS attendance of perhaps one extra day a week. The counselling service was available three days a week, but given an increasing demand for the service, did not allow any opportunity for the counsellor to engage in anything other than one on one counselling with clients. The opportunities missed as a result included group, family and parenting counselling. This point was not intended to detract from the positive service that was being provided, rather that, in the words of the Acting Inspector, 'Boronia is a good prison, but it is capable of doing better'.³² The Acting Inspector further cautioned that, 'in the event that there are elevated population levels, or more complex cases are routinely transferred to Boronia, there will need to be a service and staffing review'.³³

32 Stacey R, *Exit Debrief: Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women Inspection 11 June to 23 June 2006* (June 2006) 10.

33 *Ibid.*, 5.

Chapter 4

PROVISIONS FOR MOTHERS AND BABIES

SUMMARY

The provision for mothers and primary carers who had their children residing with them or visiting them for extended periods (overnight or day stays) was substantial. The facilities were modern and the centre's regime specifically accommodated the needs of the children.

Policy Directive 10 (PD10) provided the Department's most important policy guidelines in relation to children staying in custodial facilities with their carers. However, there were gaps in the policy in terms of definitions of 'duty of care' responsibilities. There were also aspects of this policy that were not being adequately implemented, notably the child residence strategy risk register. This had potentially serious implications for the assessment and review processes as well as for the ongoing monitoring through the care plans of children's placement at Boronia. Whilst PD 10 imposed a responsibility on staff in relation to the welfare of children residing in a custodial facility, the Department did not provide adequate training for staff in this regard. This was despite a provision in the risk register for staff to be adequately trained. Further, staff at Boronia had not all been subject to the working with children checks and this should be addressed as a matter of urgency.

The processes for information sharing within the centre and with other agencies should have been more robust. All staff were not fully aware of the custody arrangements relating to every child residing or visiting the centre for extended periods.

THE POLICY

4.1 Since opening in May 2004, there had been 32 children residing with their mothers at Boronia. The Inspector engaged an expert child care consultant to assist the inspection of the facilities and services available for mothers and children.

4.2 PD 10 states:

Women prisoners are able to care for their young babies or children in prison where it is considered to be in the best interests if the child and the management and security of the prison is not threatened ... [i]n relation to children residing in the prison, the best interests of the child are paramount. This takes into consideration the child's best alternative long-term living arrangement, regardless of the mother's wishes and capacity to care for the child.

4.3 PD 10 stipulates the following regulations in relation to children visiting or residing at Boronia:

- The age limit at which a child's residency ceases will be four years of age; and
- The age limit at which a child may be permitted to make regular extended day stays and/or overnight stays with their mother/primary carer will be up to 12 years of age.

- 4.4 According to policy, the relationship between the primary carer and the child did not necessarily have to be biological, providing that a significant primary caring relationship could be established. The Inspectorate commended this provision because, among other things it takes into account cultural considerations in relation to child rearing.³⁴
- 4.5 The following were the key focus areas for carers and children:
- The constructive day activities that were available for mothers;
 - The facilities for babies/children;
 - The care plans that were in place for the children residing at the centre;
 - The resources that were available to mothers to improve their parenting skills;
 - The support that was available for mothers who may be struggling with the parental responsibility; and
 - The process for assessing the suitability of placement of a child at Boronia.
- 4.6 In recent times there had been widespread recognition by governments, policy makers and academics that it was wrong to assume that children's best interests were automatically protected by their parents/carers. In programs that had a rehabilitation focus, children were sometimes seen as an important therapeutic device. Those supporting the rehabilitation process may argue that returning children to their carer will enhance his or her recovery/rehabilitation. However, while it may be in interests of women for their children to reside with them, it should never be assumed that this was automatically the best arrangement for the child. The best interests of the child must always be the ultimate criterion for implementing such arrangements.

DUTY OF CARE

- 4.7 The duty of care for a child either residing or visiting the centre for extended periods was the responsibility of the mother/carers. The Department did, however, acknowledge some duty of care to these children, primarily in relation to minimising risks of injury. In order to achieve this, the prison had certain obligations it must satisfy. These included:³⁵
- Ensuring a contract to be signed by the mother/carers clearly establishes the responsibilities of the prison and the mother/carers with regard to the safety and wellbeing of her child/children in the prison;
 - Providing information on responsible and safe child-rearing practices;
 - Adherence to the formal processes in relation to all aspects of child care within a custodial facility, including assessment processes, information sharing between agencies, and record keeping.

34 For this reason, the term 'carer' is implicit whenever 'mother' is used in this Report to refer to a woman at Boronia who either has her child/children residing with her at the centre or whose child/children stay at the Boronia for an extended period of time.

35 Department of Corrective Services, Policy Directive 10

4.8 PD 10 defines ‘duty of care’ as ...

... the departmental obligation to effectively manage all reasonable and foreseeable risks of harm. The duty is not absolute, but requires the Department not to be negligent and to take reasonable care to avoid foreseeable harm.

Children residing or spending extended periods of time at the centre were not isolated from the normal, day-to-day operation of the centre. Mothers and their children participated in the daily activities of the centre, and this exposed the children to almost all aspects of the centre including contact with other residents and custodial and non-custodial staff.

4.9 PD 10 places some responsibility on staff in relation to the wellbeing of children on-site:

In the normal course of their duty, staff will naturally observe the child resident in the prisons. Should staff have any concerns regarding the well-being of any child they are to report and document their concerns to the Superintendent immediately. These concerns may range from an observation that the child is unwell, to inappropriate parenting practices that are potentially damaging to the child.

While on the surface this appeared reasonable, staff that had such responsibilities required some level of training. PD 10 also outlined possible risks to children’s wellbeing involving the blurring of professional boundaries and the development of inappropriate emotional attachments between staff and children.³⁶ Staff raised, as a matter of particular concern, the lack of training in this area. They reported instances where they believed that staff had relied upon their own parenting experiences in lieu of professional knowledge to guide their understanding of the needs of the children.

4.10 Staff had clearly been placed in difficult situations with children on-site which they felt ill-equipped to deal with. The inspection team found that on one occasion, a uniformed officer was required to hand a resident child over to a Department for Community Development (DCD) representative who had come to apprehend the child and remove the child from the mother’s custody. The mother had refused to surrender the child to the DCD representative and insisted that a uniformed officer intervene. The officers involved had not been trained to manage situations such as this and admitted they were upset by the incident. Incidents such as this could damage relationships between staff and residents.

Recommendation 7

That Boronia provide in-service training to all staff likely to come into contact with children during their normal duties regarding their duty of care, safety, development and protection of children.

36 These risks are contained in Appendix A to Policy Directive 10 which is a risk register. Further information on this risk register is provided in a later section of this Chapter.

- 4.11 The role of staff in managing medical emergencies was another example of an ambiguity with regard to ‘duty of care’ responsibilities of staff in relation to children residing at Boronia. If a mother became unwell at night it was the responsibility of a uniformed officer to take her to hospital or provide whatever other appropriate intervention was required. Not only did this (negatively) impact on the staffing levels, particularly at night when staffing levels were low, this situation left no one to take care of the child.³⁷ The procedure in this instance was for staff to contact a nominated alternative carer for the child. However, in the event that this nominated alternative carer is not available, there is no one to take care of the child. This raises the question, who is responsible for the ‘duty of care’ for the child in such situations?

Recommendation 8

There is a need to develop satisfactory alternative care arrangements for the care of children should an emergency occur or a mother become unable to care for the child.

- 4.12 There was a lack of policy relating to the sharing of child related information. Boronia, Bandyup and DCD were all culpable in this regard. The incident that exposed this finding involved unreliable information sharing about the conditions placed on the custody of a child. While this information may be included in a resident’s records, a child does not have his or her own file. This has created problems for staff who have not been fully informed about custody arrangements and have acted in good faith, but which on one occasion, led to the apprehension of a child who then became a ward of the state. The lack of child related information on the part of the Department appeared to be related to the concept that the primary duty of care for children was the responsibility of the parent, not the Department. Some members of staff suggested that this assumption neither took into consideration a mother’s ability, or lack thereof, to parent effectively, nor general duty of care obligations that organisations have for children associated with them. Ultimately, this is an area that requires clarification?

Recommendation 9

That effective procedures are put in place to ensure better communication and information between DCD, Bandyup and Boronia in matters relating to the care and wellbeing of children. This must include internal information sharing at Boronia so that all staff are alerted to any matters relating to the custody of each child at Boronia.

37 The shortage of staff on the night shift has been identified in Chapter One of this Report.

ASSESSMENT OF RISK

- 4.13 Appendix A to Policy Directive 10 is the Department's child residence strategy risk register. This risk matrix identifies 94 risks relating to children residing in a custodial facility or visiting a custodial facility for an extended period of time.³⁸ The matrix also identifies the likelihood rating, consequence rating, the overall risk rating and the strategies and responsibilities associated with each identified risk.³⁹
- 4.14 The register is comprehensive and covers potential catastrophes as well as more minor incidents that may occur, ranging, for example, from 'mother could kill child' to 'child ill in the prison environment'. The risk matrix also considers the role of staff, other prisoners and visitors in relation to risks to resident children.
- 4.15 With regard to relations between staff and resident children, the risk register identifies at least 16 potential risks that need to be negotiated, most of which have an overall risk rating of 'high'. Risks relating to staff and resident children include the following:
- Abuse and/or neglect of a child by staff;
 - Inappropriate emotional attachments and blurring of professional boundaries;
 - Accidental injury;
 - Inappropriate staff intervention due to lack of training or being unaware of the relevant issues, policies, procedures, etc;
 - Lack of staff intervention due to lack of training or being unaware of the relevant issues, policies, procedures, etc; and
 - Suitability of staff to work with children.
- 4.16 The Inspectorate commends the development of this document and was impressed by the depth of thought that was invested in its creation. However, this Office is concerned that this important document was being neglected in terms of its practical application. Indeed, this was a core finding during the on-site inspection.
- 4.17 'Training and supervision' was the most common strategy that had been identified in the risk register as essential to minimising the risks with regard to the relations between staff and residents with children in their care. The Inspectorate commends these strategies which serve to underscore the recommendation to this effect made above.

38 The term 'resident child' or 'resident children' has been used in this context to refer to those children who are either permanent residents of the custodial facility or visiting for an extended period of time, including extended day visits and overnight visits.

39 It is interesting to note that this risk register, in its present, comprehensive form, has only been operative since December 2005.

- 4.18 Associated with the issue of adequate training of staff in working with children was the issue of adequate screening of staff. This was also identified as a risk in the risk register. Whilst it is acknowledged that all custodial officers have been subject to comprehensive criminal history checks prior to working in a prison, these checks are not specific to working with children. There was a serious lack of compliance with the *Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004* in ensuring comprehensive checks on all staff whose...

...usual duties...involve, or are likely to involve, contact with a child in connection with...an arrangement for the accommodation or care of children, whether in a residential facility of private residence, but not including an informal arrangement entered into for private or domestic purposes.

Recommendation 10

That Boronia ensure that all staff who have regular contact with children obtain a Working with Children Check in accordance with Section 6 of the Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004.

ASSESSING CHILDREN: WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

- 4.19 Referring again to PD 10, a Child Care Management Committee should be responsible for making and reviewing any decisions relating to the placement of children in a custodial facility. PD 10 prescribes that, where practicable, membership of this Committee is to comprise the Superintendent (or a suitable delegate), unit management team staff, health services staff, PCS, DCD and Parental Development Programs staff.
- 4.20 This committee is referred to at Boronia as the Child Review Committee. The Child Review Committee comprises the Operations Manager, the Nurse Manager, the prison counsellor, and the Manager Family and Community Services. In keeping with PD 10, the role of this Committee is to assess and review the suitability of children residing at Boronia or staying at the centre for extended periods.
- 4.21 The assessment process at Boronia meets the minimum requirements as set out in PD 10. In practice however, much of the responsibility for assessing the suitability of applications for residency rest with the Manager Family and Community Services, with input from uniformed staff. The role of uniformed staff in this process is important given the frequency and intensity of their contact with the residents in the centre. However, as noted earlier, such staff lacked suitable training for working with children.
- 4.22 The inspection was concerned to be provided with case evidence that indicated that some of the first children to be accommodated at Boronia had been accepted into the centre merely at the request of the resident, and in response to a vague understanding that it is good practice in relation to childhood development for children to be able to stay with their mother, particularly in the very early years of their lives. It appears that some applications were approved even when it was questionable as to the status of the resident as

the primary caregiver. However, the inspection found that the current processes for assessing applications by residents to have their children reside with them at the centre had become more focused and rigorous

- 4.23 The task of assessing and reviewing a resident's request to have a child reside at the centre was now largely the responsibility of the Manager Family and Community Services. The assessment process was continued over a period of time during which the Manager Family and Community Services conducted informal interviews with the applicant (mother/primary carer) to establish the context of the request and to determine the strength of the relationship between the applicant and the child.
- 4.24 This process also involved gathering information about the child's life outside the centre, for example finding out who was currently caring for the child, the activities the child participated in, how settled the child was in her/his current living arrangements, any developmental issues that needed to be considered, what the child did or did not eat, and any special support needs that the child may have. The information obtained during this process allows the Manager Family and Community Services to negotiate various options with the resident making the application. For example, she may recommend that the child have a fixed number of day or overnight stays initially rather than full-time residency.
- 4.25 Despite the obvious improvements in this process, there was scope for this assessment and review process to become more rigorous. The assessment process for determining suitability for a child to be placed at Boronia for an extended period was commonly referred to in the risk register as a strategy whereby potential risks can be minimised. These strategies placed responsibility on the Director, Women's Custodial Services and the Superintendent to develop, effectively implement and monitor the assessment process. However, the inspection found that the risk register was under utilised and not being sufficiently considered within the assessment deliberations.
- 4.26 The position of the Manager Family and Community Services at Boronia was vulnerable because, at the time of the inspection, there was no dedicated funding for this position (see Chapter 2). Further, the role of this position seemed blurred and in practice appeared to assume all responsibility for any decisions that were required relating to mothers and children at Boronia. This placed her in the difficult situation of having to maintain positive and trusting relationships with the residents, whilst at the same time having to make adverse assessments on their applications for child residency.

Recommendation 11

The procedures for assessing and reviewing the placement of children at Boronia should be even more rigorous. Factors contributing to the rigour of this process could include application of the risk register at all stages of these processes, and more clarity with regard to the role of the Manager Family and Community Services in these processes.

CARE PLANS

- 4.27 PD 10 dictates that once a prisoner has been approved to have a child reside in prison or have overnight visits, a care plan is to be formulated prior to the child entering the prison. A care plan is a document that identifies any areas of concern regarding the safety of the child in the facility, and any issues arising with respect to the child's access to the community. Care plans should also consider the individual requirements of the child, for example specific health issues, any restrictions on contact with other prisoners or movement within the prison, alternate carers both within the prison and external, and, if relevant, the level of contact with DCD.
- 4.28 In summary, therefore, a care plan is a comprehensive assessment of the individual status, requirements and specifications relating to the placement of a child in a custodial facility. Indeed, this is integral to the duty of care Boronia has in relation to mothers and children in the centre.
- 4.29 Although the care plans that were in place at Boronia met the minimum requirements as these appear in PD 10, the care plans were essentially minimal and seemed to consider the protection of other prisoners and the operation of the centre over the best interests of the child. Also, not all the care plans for children who had extended day visits or overnight visits provided information regarding the program of activities the child would engage in while he or she was at Boronia. The extent to which the care plans do consider the children's social, emotional and intellectual wellbeing seems to be dependent upon the diligence of individual mothers.
- 4.30 The inspection also found that the risk register was not being incorporated into the development of these care plans.⁴⁰ It would seem logical for such a risk assessment matrix to be an invaluable tool in the development and review of care plans for children either residing or on an extended visit to the centre.
- 4.31 In short, there was a need to develop more robust care plans that detail the provisions made for each child. The development of the care plans should take into consideration all the elements of the child's life that were considered during the assessment process referred to above, that is the child's external environment, preferences, hobbies, dietary and/or medical requirements, etc.

Recommendation 12

That Boronia develop detailed care plans that incorporate the risk assessment matrix provided in Appendix A of Policy Directive 10 for each child residing or staying at Boronia and review these care plans on a regular basis.

40 The risk register has been referred to in previous sections of this Chapter: it is Appendix A to Policy Directive 10.

THE LIVING ENVIRONMENT FOR CHILDREN AT BORONIA

4.32 Overall, the facilities for children were very good. One of the residential houses (house three) was designated as a family and children centre and from this centre opportunities were provided for children to attend playgroups and have access to toys and equipment from the toy library. The houses in which the children reside were clean and tidy and suitable for babies and children. The emotional climate in the houses visited was positive and children were being attended to in responsive and appropriate ways.

THE STRUCTURED DAY AT BORONIA AND PARENTING RESPONSIBILITIES

4.33 Participation in the structured day of work, study and other activities also applied to mothers with children residing at the centre. This was clearly articulated in Local Order 11 which required that all residents were to be engaged in one or more of the activities offered at the centre. This local policy mirrored in general terms the broader application of Policy Directive 10 that directs that mothers follow the normal prison routine as far as it is possible to do so, allowing that they may be exempted from following the daily routine in the first six weeks after giving birth.

4.34 The Inspection found that all of the mothers with resident children who were interviewed had been engaged in some form of education or work program. Women with young babies attended a range of educational classes and provision had been made in the education centre for these women to take their babies with them when attending courses or any other activity in the centre. Women with older toddlers and preschool children used the local childcare centre three days a week while they were working and/or studying. These women reported that they enjoyed the two days free from child care responsibilities during the week and that it meant that their time with their children became 'quality time'. The use of the local child care centre for respite and work related care was a positive initiative, and some of the women indicated that they would continue to use the same child care centre upon release. This would ensure continuity of care for the children and ongoing parenting support for the women.

PARENTING SUPPORT

4.35 When residents made application to have a child reside with them they were required to attend parenting programs provided by a qualified volunteer. Some women told us they were reluctant to attend the program. However, other women who had attended the parenting programs found them to be useful. The 'art theraplay' program was singled out as particularly useful and enjoyable for both the mothers and the children. One of the mothers explained:

Not all the women attend, but you have to put yourself out there, it's available, some women don't realise that you're not going to get something out of it every time. I have learned about food, nutrition and interactions. The theraplay helped with my daughter, she was very angry over the separation but theraplay helped seal our bond.

PHOTOS OF BORONIA PRE-RELEASE CENTRE FOR WOMEN



The non-denominational spiritual centre was built to support women to maintain their faith.



Mothers are supported to care for their children.



Health promotion programs, parenting skills enhancement programs and first aid courses are offered to the women.

PHOTOS OF BORONIA PRE-RELEASE CENTRE FOR WOMEN



The residences replicate houses in the community and are designed to prepare the women for re-entry into the community.



Family friendly residences accommodate mothers who have children residing with them or visiting them for extended periods (overnight or day stays).



The supermarket with colour coded food groups as determined by the Department of Health guidelines on nutrition and healthy eating standards.



Chef and training instructor Patrick Wingert demonstrates presentation techniques to hospitality trainees.



The women are employed to maintain the gardens, grow vegetables and can enrol in a horticulture traineeship to increase their employability on release to the community. The women also grow a range of plants for sale at the Centre's gala day; an annual fundraiser for charity.

- 4.36 Unfortunately, the sustainability of the parenting programs was in doubt as the programs were reliant on suitably qualified volunteers. At the time of the inspection, the volunteer who was facilitating the parenting program was not available and so the program was not being provided. This was completely unacceptable and went against the public interest as well as that of the individual mothers and children that were deprived of these opportunities. The parenting skills of many women prisoners are in great need of development, and the desire on their part to have their children in prison with them provides a unique opportunity to leverage them into parenting programs.
- 4.37 Parenting skills enhancement programs such as the Elmira Prenatal/Early Infancy Project and the Oregon Social Learning Program⁴¹ have been shown to reduce theft and other anti-social behaviour by children, to increase high school completions, improve job retention, and to reduce welfare dependency.
- 4.38 There was a critical need for a funded early-years worker to be on-site to run playgroups and support women in developing effective approaches to parenting. Boronia had been granted funding from the Department of Community Development (DCD) to operate an early years strategy at the centre for 12 months. However, this funding had run out.
- 4.39 In keeping with the principle of reflecting life in the community as far as practicable, mothers with resident children should have greater opportunity to access informal, community based child and parent support programs such as facilitated playgroups, kindergarten programs and childcare and activity centres.
- 4.40 In keeping with the suggested 'community outreach' approach, there was also a need for a 'community inreach' service whereby community based parent support programs are able to work with the women while they are still at Boronia. For example, a resident who will return to her home in Midland on release could be connected to an appropriate agency in the Midland community. A volunteer from this agency should initiate contact with the woman whilst she is still in Boronia, thus establishing a supportive relationship with the resident that is more likely to be continued upon her release. This arrangement is in place in cases where the resident is a DCD client, and so DCD pays for the service. If the resident is not a DCD client, however, there are no funds to pay for these types of services, which would appear to be essential in terms of reconnecting the women with their communities upon release.

41 Grabosky, P & James, M (1995) *The Promise of Crime Prevention*, Australian Institute of Criminology

Recommendation 13

- i. In recognising services for families and children, Boronia must secure ongoing funding for its early years strategy which should include a position for an early years worker in order to reduce the dependency on volunteers for these essential services.*
- ii. As part of parenting support Boronia should encourage both community inreach and outreach strategies whereby community organisations engage with the women while still at Boronia and provide continuous support to them on release.*

CHILDREN IN THE CARE OF DCD

- 4.41 DCD had generally encouraged the reuniting of a mothers resident at Boronia with a child who is in the care of DCD care. Through a reunification program the child/children attended the centre either for an overnight visit or an extended day stay. The inspection team observed a mother interacting with her child as part of the reunification program, and noted the mother's focus and responsiveness to her child who appeared comfortable and relaxed. The mother maintained that the support she had received at Boronia, particularly that provided by the Manager of Family and Community Services, had been instrumental in developing her skills and confidence to parent her children effectively.
- 4.42 However, there was a concern that DCD may have allowed a mother to have custody of a child at Boronia who would otherwise have been in the care of DCD, were the mother not in Boronia. The underlying assumption appeared to be that Boronia was able to provide a supportive environment in which the mother would be able to cope with the child, but that this would not be possible once the mother is released and that DCD may indeed apprehend the child once the mother were released. The inspection was concerned that this appeared to place a responsibility on Boronia to provide a level of supervision beyond what would normally be considered a reasonable duty of care. There needed to be much clearer contractual agreements in place between Boronia and DCD regarding the supervision of women caring for children who were wards of the state or who would become wards of the state upon the mother's release from Boronia.

Chapter 5

REHABILITATION

SUMMARY

Rehabilitation and preparation for release is a fundamental responsibility of a pre-release facility. This responsibility was being effectively discharged at Boronia. The inspection team assessed rehabilitation through detailed inspections of the following services:

- Assessment of risk;
- Case management;
- Programs;
- Education; and
- Pre-release services.

The inspection found that the process for assessing eligibility to reside at Boronia was transparent and appropriately applied, thereby dispelling a pre-inspection concern that the centre was being covertly ‘feather bedded’ because only those prisoners with a relatively ‘clean’ record and who were not reputed to be ‘problematic’ were being assessed as eligible for placement at Boronia. Nonetheless, the Inspection found that the capacity of the centre was far from being fully utilised. This cogently argued the urgent need for a move away from the current classification instruments that do not differentiate between the risks posed by women and male prisoners and which appear to place an over-reliance upon static risk factors and under emphasises dynamic factors. A new women-centred assessment tool to better assess the risks that women prisoners pose will be required before the capacity at Boronia can be fully utilised.

Given the profile of the female offender population in Western Australia Boronia should provide a range of programs, information sessions and strategies in relation to domestic violence.

The inspection discovered a generally thorough approach being taken by external agencies that provided pre-release /re-entry services at the centre, however, there was a lack of coordination amongst the various agencies and between the centre and the external agencies.

ASSESSMENTS OF RISK POSED BY WOMEN PRISONERS

- 5.1 As described in the opening chapter of this Report, the Department has developed a new philosophy in relation to the imprisonment of women in Western Australia. The philosophy acknowledged the different needs of men and women in custody, and the requirement for different services for male and female prisoners. However, the current classification system does not differentiate between males and females, notwithstanding the new philosophy. Thus, it is difficult to understand how the classification process can support this new women-centred philosophy. This point was emphasised in the Inspectorate’s *Report No. 30*⁴² in which it was argued that ‘[I]ndeed, there is a body of literature that argues that a male-based or normed classification system will negatively impact upon women’.⁴³ The main criterion for eligibility for transfer to Boronia was a minimum-security classification. However, the existing classification is prone to over-classify female offenders. This consequently reduces the number of women who might otherwise be given a minimum-security rating.

42 Report No. 30 Directed Review of the Management of Offenders in Custody (November 2005)

43 Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services (OICS), *Directed Review of the Management of Offenders in Custody*, Report No. 30 (November 2005), 22.

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- 5.2 None of this is to deny the changing pattern of female offending, or to deny that there are some dangerous women prisoners. However, the Department has conducted regular surveys of women imprisoned in Western Australia since 2002, and has developed a profile of female offenders in prisons in this state (see Chapter One). The profile reveals a population of women who have experienced significant social and economic disadvantage when compared to the female Western Australian population as a whole. It highlights the disruption experienced by the families of female prisoners and the difficulties faced in maintaining family relationships during a period of imprisonment. It also clearly demonstrates that Aboriginal women suffer even greater, systemic levels of disadvantage. Such research must now be used to inform the assessment process for female prisoners.
- 5.3 The current classification system has created an imbalance in security classifications across the system, with more prisoners being kept at medium and maximum-security levels than the system can, and arguably should, accommodate. This situation is obvious in many Western Australian prisons. Eastern Goldfields Regional Prison,⁴⁴ for example, experiences constant overcrowding in its maximum-security unit, whilst at times, the rest of the prison has been under-occupied. Further, the prison struggles to find sufficient prisoners to sustain and develop its Section 94 program, including the Work Camp that is attached to the prison, due to the rigidity of the assessment process and a Department-wide conservative approach in this regard.
- 5.4 In his exit debrief, the Acting Inspector explained that⁴⁵ ...
- ... low-security placement ... requires well-developed objective classification systems and good quality of placement decision-making to achieve the expected correctional objectives. The Inspectorate has observed a general conservatism in policy setting and decision-making in recent times that has reduced low-security placement. The situation is not sustainable. It is neither consistent with correctional research nor affordable in terms of value for money. The Inspectorate's *Report No. 30* has had plenty to say about this. For the purpose of this inspection it should suffice to say that a women-centred review of assessment and placement should be a priority to allow Boronia to evolve and establish its proper place in the continuum of custodial options ... the current level of occupancy is impeding Boronia's development.
- 5.5 The matter of the insufficient resident numbers at Boronia is detailed in Chapter two of this Report. It denies many women prisoners the opportunity for enhanced preparation for release and it represents low correctional value for money.

44 Eastern Goldfields Regional Prison is a mixed prison and accommodates both male and female prisoners.

45 Stacey R, *Exit Debrief: Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women Inspection 11 June to 23 June 2006* (June 2006) 7.

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The policy for assessing the security classifications for female offenders in Western Australia should be reviewed as a matter of priority. This review should embrace a women-centred framework that considers the different risks posed by male and female prisoners. A women-centred assessment policy should interpret female offending within the historical context of abuse, neglect, substance use, mental illness, etc, that have been identified as relevant to female offending in the Department's own 'profile of women in custody' surveys.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR PLACEMENT AT BORONIA?

- 5.6 Most of the prisoners who have been transferred to Boronia are from Bandyup Women's Prison which is the primary assessment centre for women prisoners. Boronia does not undertake any assessment of the suitability of prisoners for placement at the centre, although a good working relationship exists between the staff at these two facilities.
- 5.7 The politically sensitive climate in which Boronia was established and first opened its doors has to a large extent dissipated. Nonetheless, that sensitivity, encouraged the perception that Boronia only accepted the 'cream of the crop' of prisoners, and would avoid accepting any prisoners who may have behavioural problems or be difficult to manage in some way. This perception extended to the belief that prisoners were deliberately being held at medium or maximum-security classifications to avoid the possibility of them being assessed as eligible for placement at Boronia.
- 5.8 The findings from the recent inspection of Boronia, however, have dispelled this myth.⁴⁶ All female prisoners who reached a minimum-security rating were being considered as eligible for placement at Boronia. Although minimum-security rated prisoners may have had to stay at Bandyup for medical reasons. Also, the transfer of eligible prisoners to Boronia may have been delayed for women undergoing withdrawal from drugs or alcohol, until at least 24 hours following administration of the last medication dose. As earlier indicated, full psychological, health, education and program needs assessments must be completed at Bandyup, and in the past, there had been long delays for transfer to Boronia for otherwise eligible women as Bandyup's assessment process was behind schedule. The backlog had been cleared at the time of the inspection and, as at 13 June 2006, there was only one woman pending full assessment before being eligible for transfer.
- 5.9 The majority of women held at Boronia were from the Perth metropolitan region, with re-entry services and providers focussed on metropolitan releases. There had also been women from a regional facility, although this was uncommon given the priority given holding women as close to their homes and families as possible. Nevertheless, information about Boronia should be made available to all women in so that they are given the opportunity to request a transfer to Boronia, should they so prefer. The Acting Inspector

46 Stacey R, *Exit Debrief: Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women Inspection 11 June to 23 June 2006* (June 2006) 6.

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suggested in the exit debrief that ‘some consideration should be given to careful selection of some more regionally-based women who would benefit from a pre-release placement at Boronia’.⁴⁷

REMOVAL FROM BORONIA

5.10 Associated with perception that Boronia had been selective about the prisoners it accepted was a related misunderstanding that the threat of a permanent transfer back to Bandyup had been used to keep residents in line. Certainly, Boronia did not have disciplinary or punishment cells available for rule breaking residents. However, the centre had been active in developing alternative strategies for dealing with problematic residents. Management plans had been consultatively developed which included: transfers to a different work area or residence, referrals to counselling or other services, changes to allowed privileges and earned gratuities, or simple negotiation with the resident. This Office was assured by management that an upgrade to a resident’s security classification was used as an absolute last resort. The Acting Inspector commended this practice in his exit debrief:⁴⁸

We were satisfied that the prison had managed some past cases well, to the extent that there was evidence of situational analysis and risk assessment rather than a propensity to evoke security re-classification on the nature of events alone.

CASE MANAGEMENT AND REVIEW

- 5.11 The case management model at Boronia was found to be comprehensive and better practice in comparison to other prisons in Western Australia.⁴⁹ All custodial officers have been case officers, and case officers have had a typical caseload of three residents each.
- 5.12 As at 21 April 2006, 31 out of a total of 40 residents ‘qualified’ for case management, according to their respective sentence circumstances. All had allocated case officers and up to date Individual Management Plans (IMPs) with no scheduled reviews uncompleted. Generally, initial IMPs were developed at Bandyup with Boronia case officers conducting the IMP reviews when they fell due. All residents who were consulted about the status and their knowledge of their IMPs (both in the pre-inspection focus groups and individual interviews during the inspection) indicated that they understood the IMP process as well as the details of their own plans. In addition, they all reported that they were confident to approach either their case officers or the Operations Manager for verification of any aspect of their IMPs.
- 5.13 Case management included a welfare service component, and was, therefore, a more thorough process than that stipulated by the strict departmental definition of case management. Case officers counselled residents regarding behavioural or other problematic issues, and often thereby identified additional program needs. Officers also often facilitated

47 Ibid, p.7

48 Ibid, p.7

49 This comment must be considered in the context of the low resident population at Boronia.

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welfare phone calls to an agency, family, or friends, including to arrange accommodation for release, or the re-issue of bankcards or Medicare cards, etc. Resident interviews and observation during the inspection confirmed that officers were general helpful in assisting to resolve welfare issues, and were approachable and respectful in their interactions.

- 5.14 Boronia had been effective in preparing prisoners for release with most eligible residents being granted parole upon first application. At the time of inspection, there was only one resident held past her earliest release date, due to ‘unaddressed offending behaviour’ that had resulted in her parole being deferred, to be reviewed again after the completion of the *Reconnections* program. Home leave applications were regularly granted to eligible residents (usually those sentenced for at least 12 months with no prison drug charges in their current term) with three women on home leave orders at the time of the inspection.

PROGRAMS

Departmental Offender Treatment Programs

- 5.15 Minimum-security prisoners should be able to access all necessary programs and an environment appropriate to their status as ‘prisoners who can be reasonably trusted in open conditions, requiring a low degree of supervision and control within the prison’.⁵⁰ Keeping minimum-security women in maximum-security at Bandyup in order to complete programs should always be minimised. However, it must be acknowledged that the relatively small number of women prisoners often means that programs, particularly high-intensity programs may not have viable numbers in all prisons where women are held. However, low intensity programs that have relapse prevention as a focus should be available minimum-security prisoners.
- 5.16 However, Boronia was not considered to be a ‘programs prison’. Consequently, the Inspection was informed that all program needs should have been met prior to women being placed at Boronia. The reality, however, was that the demand for programs was high and waiting periods to attend programs were often lengthy. When Boronia first opened, it was the case that some women were held back at Bandyup waiting to do programs that were often delayed or never ran. This unfairly prevented their transfer to Boronia. However, at the time of inspection prisoners who had attained minimum-security status were only being retained at Bandyup if they were currently undertaking a program or scheduled to commence within a month, to ensure programs were completed at scheduled times.
- 5.17 To the Department’s credit, and despite its preference for Boronia not to become a ‘programs’ prison, departmental programs were successfully run at the centre during the first two years of its operation. Until May 2006, eight separate programs and a number of individual interventions and individual counselling sessions had been completed. In total, in the first two years of operation, 38 residents had participated in programs with 36 successfully completing.

50 Definition of minimum security in DGs Rule 18.

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- 5.18 Generally speaking across all prisons, delays to start of program has been common and has been highlighted in many Inspectorate reports as a system wide problem that requires urgent attention. This issue was also a concern at Boronia. Delays and rescheduling of programs had raised the stress of residents needing to complete courses specified on their IMP to increase their chances of being granted parole.
- 5.19 In some instances the delivery of programs had been compromised by the low population at the centre. This meant that the centre has only been able to sustain one program running at a time.

A Women-Centred Approach

- 5.20 *Reconnections* was the Department's only program that had been specifically designed for women. It was developed in 2005 and piloted at Bandyup Women's Prison and presented to Boronia residents in 2006, ending shortly before the inspection.
- 5.21 The program was women focussed and moved away from the rigidly cognitive-behavioural approaches used in other programs. It used a combination of narrative, as well as systems and cognitive-behavioural therapies. It involved group work and placed importance on the therapeutic relationship between participants and facilitators. It took a holistic approach to addressing a broad range of issues including family violence, sexual abuse, trauma, relationship issues, communication and so forth.
- 5.22 As the program had only run as a pilot and was still awaiting evaluation, it was not yet further scheduled in the Assessment and Integrated Prison Regime (AIPR) system. Anecdotally, officers commented that it had effected many changes in attitude and behaviour. Participants also expressed positive reactions to the program. The Offender Programs Evaluation Committee (OPEC) attended Boronia, coincidentally, during the inspection to conduct exit interviews with the program's participants as part of an evaluation process. The Inspectorate supports the continued development and evaluation of specifically women-centred intervention and treatment programs.

Specific Program Requirements at Boronia

- 5.23 Surprisingly, there were no programs provided at Boronia to specifically address issues around domestic violence. The Department's surveys of female prisoners had revealed high levels of abuse and it seemed obvious that programs tackling domestic violence should be frequently run.

Recommendation 15

The Department should resource the delivery of programs and/or other interventions at Boronia that specifically address domestic violence and related issues.

- 5.24 There was a lot of energy among the non-custodial staff to develop innovative opportunities to maximise the potential for the successful release of women into the community. The inspection team was informed of various initiatives in this regard during the inspection. For example, the Prison Counselling Service (PCS) proposed small group sessions with residents, covering issues not met by existing programs, such as mood management, sleep management, budgeting, and time management skills. This move away from the traditional crisis intervention work by the PCS was highly relevant for the relative

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stability of the population and the low need for crisis intervention services. Another initiative was proposed involving utilising Master's students on placement to implement and deliver life skills programs, possibly after hours so as not to disrupt residents' structured day routines. Such programs could be managed on a local level, provided there was support from the Women's Custodial Services Directorate to source and maintain funding. The inspectorate will follow the development of these innovative proposals in the coming year.

EDUCATION SERVICES

Extent of the Service

- 5.25 Boronia had a new and rapidly developing education service. The aim for Education and Training, as identified in a departmental submission prior to the inspection, was to create 'a maximum choice of options available to [residents] upon release for employment, training or further education'. Inspection of the education services at Boronia revealed a strong emphasis on education, with a focus on individual tailored learning paths for each resident. This was consistent with good practice elsewhere.
- 5.26 The average enrolment figure for 2004 and 2005 in education at Boronia was 80 per cent of the population. At the time of the inspection in June 2006, there were four full-time students and 37 part-time students – a participation rate of over 97 per cent. This high participation rate indicated that the service was appropriate and meeting many of the needs of the population.
- 5.27 The inspection team found that the services were being professionally delivered. The quality of the facilities incorporated into the purpose built centre were impressive, with all the components necessary for an ideal educational environment, such as rooms that were large enough, ample storage, natural light and functioning equipment. Residents accessed the education centre between 7 am and 10 pm – a full 15 hours per day! This was very good practice. Mothers with resident children utilised the childcare service in order to attend education classes, although the education centre did allow small children/babies to be accommodated temporarily while their mothers engaged in education.
- 5.28 The staff team in the education centre were proactive and flexible in the delivery of education to the residents. Staffing costs seemed to provide excellent value for money with approximately two or three Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff positions being occupied by about eight different staff members, thereby catering for approximately 160 students per year. Considering that high levels of individualised programming were necessary, this was excellent value for money. The Senior Education Officer position was job shared by two people, and this appeared to work well. Virtually any course available at TAFE and many university and other agency courses could be accessed for study to some level. Residents were able to study on-site via computer based learning packages and visiting tutors, or could attend study off-site, with Section 94 approval.
- 5.29 There appeared to be an over-representation of residents at the higher end of the literacy skills scale at Boronia. The centre's analysis of results from formal literacy screening assessments indicated that 47 per cent of residents (who have had an assessment) had sound

literacy skills. Only 15 per cent of residents had only basic or little literacy at all, in comparison to about 46 per cent of the Australian population. The implication of this finding was that there was a reduced need for general education and basic literacy education at Boronia and more scope for residents to undertake higher level studies. This situation had resulted in only five of the 37 enrolled students engaged in basic literacy and language courses at the time of the inspection.

Pre-release Strategies

- 5.30 Ten out of 47 residents were enrolled in traineeships. This was an impressive achievement. This was assisted by the traineeship period being reduced from 12 months to six months. However, even this contracted period was sometimes not sufficient for a resident to complete the traineeship at Boronia. Hospitality trainees were offered the opportunity to complete the traineeship at Manner's Restaurant operated by Centacare Employment and Training. This offered a useful post-release employment option. Horticulture traineeships needed a similar pathway so those women who did not complete the traineeship could continue after release.
- 5.31 Excellent arrangements were in place to ensure that as many women as possible left prison with a valid drivers licence. Driver theory was available for residents within six months of their release date. Driving lessons were also available on Section 94 through a contracted driver training company. This was an excellent pre-release strategy that went a long way toward minimising the possibility of residents re-entering the prison system because of invalid drivers licences, and also provided a valuable form of identity confirmation.
- 5.32 Tutors received a list of all students due to be released each month and were asked to review their work with them and identify areas where they could complete enough to achieve competence before they left. Tutors could request extra hours for this purpose, and these requests were normally approved. Tutors also were asked to withdraw students from subjects they were not able to complete by the end of their stay if they were not able to continue outside so there was a result on the data system rather than simply a 'no result' that may reflect badly on the resident should she wish to continue the course at a later time.

Relations with External Agencies

- 5.33 The inspection team found that there were no documented agreements between Boronia (education centre) and external agencies that provided services. The Australian Quality Training Framework Standards for Registered Training Organisations (2005) required Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) to have a written agreement with each organisation that provided training and/or assessment on behalf of the RTO showing 'how each party will discharge its responsibilities for compliance with the Standards for RTOs' (See Standard 1.6). There did not seem to be any such documents covering the arrangements between Boronia and the various TAFEs and private providers that deliver such services.

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Recommendation 16

Written agreements should be developed between the education centre at Boronia and each agency that provides education services at Boronia. These agreements should be specific about the range of the services to be provided and the expectations each party has in relation to the working relationship between the education centre at Boronia and the particular agency concerned.

PREPARATION FOR RELEASE

Pre-release Opportunities

- 5.34 All residents attended an exit interview at the education centre within a month prior to release, and they attended a medical discharge assessment about a week before release. As part of the good practice case management model at Boronia, case officers also checked with residents approaching release to ensure they have transport, accommodation and other necessities organised for release.
- 5.35 There was a plethora of different agencies that visited Boronia and provided pre-release, and many other, services to the residents. Most visiting support agencies could be accessed in the community. At the time of inspection, the centre was focussing on linking to services on the outside, such as the Grand Families program facilitated by an Indigenous group linked to community based Aboriginal health services. Each month an updated schedule of visitors and events at Boronia was being provided to all residents and staff.
- 5.36 The inclusion of community agencies in a pre-release centre was appropriate in connecting residents to people and organisations they may need when they are released. However, there appeared to be a lack of coordination between the various agencies going into Boronia and a lack of information sharing amongst these agencies in relation to the services they provided. This lack of coordination has also been found in many other pre-release facilities in this state.⁵¹ This situation increased the potential for agencies to experience isolation within the centre which may lead them to withdraw from the facility. Furthermore, this uncoordinated approach increased the potential for missed opportunities for the residents to benefit from joined up services.
- 5.37 Also, there was a lack of evidence of any evaluation of the services provided by the external agencies. There were obviously good and long-running relationships with some agencies and an interest from the community to provide in-reach services, but without any obligation to report back on how services were actually going. More could have been done to ensure visiting services were supported and were required to provide some regular updates on service delivery and effectiveness.

51 Specifically the as yet unpublished Report of an Announced Inspection of Wooroloo Prison Farm, April 2006.

Recommendation 17

Boronia should work together with the visiting agencies to establish clear lines of communication about the services they provide. An action plan should be developed to ensure the better integration and coordination of these agencies and their services, and the plan should include provision for evaluation of and feedback on these services.

- 5.38 A Community Corrections Officer (CCO) attended Boronia twice a week for half a day. The CCO also worked at Bandyup. This Officer had been in this role since it was introduced in 1997 and was thus experienced, recognised and had established networks. The main role of the prison based CCO was to work with long-term high risk offenders. At Boronia, however, there were relatively few of this category of prisoners. However, the liaised with any resident who requested an interview. Community-based CCOs should interview residents a few weeks prior to the date of earliest eligibility for release, to complete reports required by the parole board. Consequently residents get an opportunity to meet their parole officer at least once before release. This is good ‘throughcare’ practice in which a connection is established within prison that is maintained externally.
- 5.39 During the period 26 October 2005 to 26 April 2006, 40 residents were released from Boronia. The sentence lengths varied considerably, with some residents having been released after spending as little as one month at the centre, whilst others were released after longer stays. Indeed, there were residents who had been there since the centre opened in May 2004.

Re-entry service providers

- 5.40 The re-entry services at Boronia provided good support for the resident in the time leading up to the end of her sentence and in the first few months following her release. The services included accommodation, family assistance and arranging social security payments for residents.
- 5.41 Ruah was the contracted provider for the Re-entry Link services for metropolitan female prisoners, and provided services at both Bandyup and Boronia. Ruah engaged with prisoners three months prior to release and continued for up to six months following a prisoner’s release. It was a relationship-based program, thus women were required to engage with the service provider several months prior to release in order to get to know their case worker who would normally remain for the entire time the resident participates in the program. This was a good pre-release strategy in that it established a connection between the prison environment and the outside environment. Women were also be linked with other services to address issues such as drug use, accommodation, child custody and DCD involvement.
- 5.42 Ruah was also a Community Transitional Accommodation and Support Services (TASS) provider for metropolitan women, offering six months tenancy in public housing for eligible women. Women could access TASS without participating in Re-entry Link, although they must request TASS assistance at least three months prior to release due to the demand for TASS housing.

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- 5.43 Outcare provided support primarily to families of residents. An Outcare family support worker attended Boronia at every visits session, and an Outcare representative was available at Boronia once a week to assist residents with family issues. Outcare's role focused on welfare assistance for residents' families, visiting or in the community, such as food vouchers, petrol vouchers, or referrals for assistance with clothing and furniture. Outcare was also part of the TASS scheme and thus also provided accommodation options for residents upon release, although these were limited. All new residents at Boronia were contacted by the Outcare worker who advised them of the services available.
- 5.44 In some instances, the services offered by Ruah and Outcare were duplicated. Within a pre-release environment where the demand for services most often exceeded supply, this duplication was not assessed as constituting a waste of resources.
- 5.45 Centrelink officers attended the centre once a week. They assessed eligibility for payments upon release and also answered general enquiries and family assistance payment queries. If eligible, claims for payments were processed prior to release and payment cards left in the resident's property until the day of release. This meant that the released resident did not have to attend a Centrelink office on the day she is released.

Chapter 6

REPARATION

SUMMARY

The Inspection found that Boronia was a leader among prisons in relation to providing work and training opportunities, with a strong community focus. Unfortunately, this was not supported by the Department's systems for monitoring and did not fit well with the Department's 'traditional' definitions of reparative activities.

Reparation was necessarily limited by the small population at the centre (which when increased will allow other reparative work to be undertaken). All residents at Boronia were engaged in reparative activities on a daily basis. The outside work and activity programs authorised under Section 94 of the *Prisons Act 1981* should be reviewed to ensure that they are sustainable and robust. The Inspectorate was not satisfied that the current operation of the program was adequate to successfully preparing residents for reintegration into the community.

Other aspects of reparation at Boronia were positive, namely the community in-reach program and the work related reparative activities that take place within the centre, notably the catering industry.

REPARATION IN THE CONTEXT OF BORONIA'S PHILOSOPHY

- 6.1 The Reparation custodial cornerstone focused on the actions of criminal offenders to offset some of the impact of their crime/s. The value of such reparation has been measured in dollar terms or in hours of activity. The reparative model that was promoted by the Department comprised three core components:
 1. Minimising custodial costs;
 2. Community outreach; and
 3. Community in-reach.
- 6.2 There were many developmental opportunities for prisoners in most of the work and other activities undertaken at Boronia. Reparative activities, therefore, included rehabilitative impacts, for example increasing skills, developing appropriate work habits, and so on.
- 6.3 Community responsibility was one of the four fundamental principles of the Boronia philosophy and residents were expected to contribute to society through reparative activities that focused on providing services voluntarily in ways that were meaningful to the local community. This led to the establishment of a number of mutually beneficial relationships between residents and the local community in which the community were receiving services that could otherwise be a financial burden, and residents received support outside of the custodial environment thus increasing their capacity to reintegrate into these communities when they were released. In this way, reparation was yet another means by which Boronia prepared its residents for release and successful reintegration into the community.

REPARATION

THE DEPARTMENT'S APPROACH TO REPARATION

- 6.4 The Department set performance targets for what it considered to be key areas. The two key performance targets for reparation were the percentage of eligible prisoners in employment, education or offender programs, and the average hours per eligible prisoner in such activities per day. This was all the Department required Boronia to report on in terms of reparation on the Department's electronic Prison Performance Measurement Scheme (PPMS).
- 6.5 This statistical and work based emphasis did not take into account the full range of reparative activities in which Boronia participated. The broad scope of reparation was reflected in the following planned activities included in Boronia's most recent business plan:⁵²
- Enhance and review Section 94 activities;
 - Continue to support and identify not-for-profit organisations with proceeds of fund raising activities;
 - Undertake opportunities to educate the community on Boronia's functions and activities;
 - Continue to participate in community projects;
 - Identify suitable prisoners for community and volunteer work;
 - Enhance Community Advisory Group's role;
 - Continue to provide community events at Boronia for local Bentley residents; and
 - To continue to identify meaningful community based work opportunities that are linked to accredited training.
- 6.6 These were all commendable initiatives, none of which Boronia was required to report on and ultimately therefore, none of which were counted. The Department should have recognised that reparation encompassed more than what is set out on PPMS. The Department would benefit from a more comprehensive approach to measuring reparation and, given Boronia's articulation of its reparative goals, it would appear to be a good place for the Department to trial such measures.

Recommendation 18

The Department should review its view on the vast range of activities that fall into the category of reparation, and should work with Boronia to develop and trial a comprehensive measure of reparation taking into account the components of reparation detailed here. This is essential if the Department and Boronia are to work together to achieve meaningful and measurable reparative outcomes.

52 Prisons Division Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women Business Plan 2005/2006 pp. 3, 10.

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WORK AT BORONIA

- 6.7 Reparative work at Boronia included all services provided by residents that would otherwise need to be contracted in, such as cleaning, internal catering, gardens and facility maintenance, and vegetable production. During the inspection it was evident that this work was being carried out to a high standard. The facility was attractively presented and was viewed an asset to the area by its local community. In addition, residents were of course required to maintain the cleanliness and hygiene of their own houses.
- 6.8 At Boronia there was a large and well developed commercial catering industry. Fifteen or more women were employed in the production of food for sale internally to staff, or externally under contract to businesses in the area as well as departmental functions. The product and services delivered by Boronia was of a high quality and was produced in 'state of the art'⁵³ commercial conditions. The catering staff were also used as service personnel for functions held within (and sometimes outside) Boronia. This activity earned significant income (approximately \$100,000 in 2005, 4.2% of Boronia's total budget) and provided the women with work experiences commensurate with what they could expect in a commercial setting.
- 6.9 These core services were supported by an enthusiastic and proactive Vocational Support Officer (VSO) group, who were in turn supported in their roles by the centre management. Most of the residents interviewed at Boronia expressed a strong desire to gain work skills and that they enjoyed their work. This attitude, combined with the enthusiasm of the VSOs, had led to the development of six traineeships, five in catering and one in horticulture. This was a good outcome that the VSOs were determined to improve upon. Traineeships were not always feasible given the short sentences many of the women were serving.⁵⁴ Hospitality trainees from the metropolitan area were offered the opportunity to complete the traineeship at a local restaurant. Similar initiatives were required for horticulture.⁵⁵
- 6.10 While there was an emphasis on specific traineeships, there was also a strong emphasis on training and skills development through quality work for all of the workers, including those women not in traineeships. Efforts were made to normalise the work conditions as much as possible, including a provision for overtime work on weekends in the kitchen. As a testament to the quality of the work conditions and the training delivered, a number of the women from the catering area had moved into paid employment in that industry after release. Many of these jobs were organised for the residents while they were still in Boronia.
- 6.11 Overall, the work based and commercial reparative activities at Boronia were of a high quality and they delivered real benefits to the Department and community through cost savings and skills development.

53 Quoted by the Chef Instructor in his description of the kitchen facilities at Boronia.

54 It is acknowledged that the population mix at Boronia may change, particularly if initiatives to increase the numbers at Boronia come to fruition.

55 This point has been made in Chapter Four of this Report.

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- 6.12 However, reparation remained limited by the small population. A core number of residents was required to work within the centre to keep it functioning on a daily basis. At the time of the inspection, 39 residents (3/4 of the population) were required to work in the centre in some capacity to ensure the efficient functioning of the centre and to ensure that (specifically catering) contracts were honoured. This frequently limited the number of prisoners available to work in the community. This point is further explored in the section below.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

- 6.13 Reparation through providing services to the community was a core component of Boronia's operating philosophy. This was facilitated primarily through Boronia's community outreach program, also referred to as the Section 94 program.⁵⁶
- 6.14 The criteria for eligibility for achieving Section 94 status was a minimum-security classification, followed by a 28 day period during which the prisoner had to remain within the confines of the centre. This allowed prison staff to observe the prisoner and also allowed the prisoner time to settle in.
- 6.15 The community outreach program involved a range of reparative activities. Those residents who participated in the work-related component of the Section 94 program left the centre each day to assist various community agencies including the RSPCA, Good Samaritans, Food Bank, and Santa's Workshop. The residents had also been involved in volunteer work for the local aged care facilities, and had recently joined with a local council in a beautification project to paint and decorate two bus shelters.
- 6.16 The work was varied and not necessarily skills based. Tasks included cleaning or re-assembling toys, cleaning animal enclosures, sorting clothing and other donations to charity organisations, and so on. This work was valued by these agencies that would otherwise have to rely on volunteers to give up their time to assist with these tasks. On average, five residents were involved in this program at any given time. The program generated over 700 hours of community service for the three month period January 2006 to March 2006.
- 6.17 The community outreach program was delivering services that provided community assistance. The Memorandum of Understanding signed by each resident upon arrival at Boronia included a commitment to 'contribute to Reparation to the Community by being involved in activities with the community as assessed appropriate'.⁵⁷ The program at Boronia, however, was under-developed. The under-utilisation of the Section 94 program impacts negatively on opportunities for residents to reconnect with their communities, which, in turn, limited the reparative functions of the centre.

56 Section 94 refers to the specific part of the *Prisons Act 1981* that provides authorisation for a prisoner to leave a custodial facility for approved programs and/or activities. These can include leaving the facility to attend educational and/or recreational activities, activities related to the care and wellbeing of prisoners such as attending funerals, or, as is relevant here, work related activities.

57 Boronia Pre-release Centre, Standing Order B5, Appendix 1.

REPARATION

6.18 The Acting Inspector in the exit debrief emphasised the shortcomings of the Section 94 program:

Section 94 programs have not developed to a satisfactory level. There is currently one FTE with five off-site places to supervise and only 4-6 prisoners are involved in this essential community networking opportunity. Furthermore, the Section 94 officer has been assigned some recreational duties and her hours of work have been somewhat distorted as a consequence.

6.19 The community outreach program at Boronia was a core component of the centre's reparative capabilities. However, the Section 94 program had a priority well below other activities such as education and internal work related reparative activities. This was not acceptable for a pre-release centre. The Inspectorate has, on previous occasions, recommended a 20 per cent target for prisoner participation in Section 94 reparation programs. Given the nature of Boronia, this should be a minimum target. In the words of the Acting Inspector, 'Boronia can and should do better than it is at this time'.⁵⁸

Recommendation 19

The Section 94 work program at Boronia should be reviewed with particular focus on the following aspects of the program:

- *Increasing the number of residents participating in the program;*
- *Increasing the range of community agencies as Section 94 sites as well as the diversity of the services residents are expected to provide; and*
- *Improving the quality of the services provided by engaging the skills residents have been equipped with and incorporating these within the duties that are required to be performed.*

6.20 Finally, the Inspectorate disagreed with the 28 day 'waiting' period for participation in a Section 94 program. This supposedly risk management approach should indeed be based on a calculated assessment of risk rather than an artificial period of time. Further, this Office believed that the risk management decisions about a prisoner's Section 94 eligibility were best made at the local level, that is by the relevant Superintendent at the particular facility, and should not be dictated by overly bureaucratic departmental policies. The 28 day waiting period was particularly frustrating for residents who may only be there for as little as three months. Unnecessarily restricting the time a resident participated in external activities was inconsistent with preparing them for release.

COMMUNITY 'IN-REACH'

6.21 The Inspectorate was impressed by the extent to which this aspect of reparation had been realised at Boronia. The Acting Inspector acknowledged 'the considerable efforts made by the prison thus far to seek out and make welcome the general community and volunteers'.⁵⁹

58 Stacey R, *Exit Debrief: Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women Inspection 11 June to 23 June 2006* (June 2006) 4.

59 Ibid.

REPARATION

Every effort was being made to draw the outside community into the life of Boronia. In this regard it was leading the other prisons in this state.

- 6.22 In 2005, Boronia residents raised over \$5,000 for charity. This was largely derived from the profit made from a 'Gala Day' which was held in November 2005, and which has now become an annual event. All residents were involved in preparing for the Gala Day, and many of the women in prisons across Western Australia also helped to prepare for the event by making items, which were sold on the day. Residents were also consulted as to which charity the money that was raised should be donated.
- 6.23 Boronia hosted a number of concerts to which the residents in the surrounding aged care facilities were invited. This variety of community engagement is beneficial for all those involved: the elderly people who attended these events enjoyed the performances that were provided free of charge; the residents all pitched in and helped with the organisation of these events. Residents in the catering industry had the chance to showcase the skills and training they have worked so hard to achieve. These initiatives should be highly regarded.
- 6.24 The centre had an extensive volunteer base that provided crucial assistance and services for Boronia's community in-reach program. There is a Volunteer Coordinator position whose primary responsibility was the coordination of all volunteers coming in to the centre. This was an unfunded position in that it was not a service the Department funds Boronia for, rather the funding for the position comes from profit from the catering service. Boronia welcomed and valued the volunteers and aimed to ensure that the volunteers' experiences at Boronia were mutually beneficial for both the residents and the volunteers. This also was a good initiative and is consistent with the true meaning of reparation.

Chapter 7

RECOMMENDATIONS

ADMINISTRATION

1. There must be a supportive relationship between the Director of Women's Custodial Services and the centre management. This must also extend to support for an adequate allocation of funding for the centre to enable it to meet the high needs of its prisoner population and to develop new initiatives.

STAFFING ISSUES

2.
 - i. Key positions that remain unfunded at Boronia must be finalised at the earliest opportunity. This recommendation relates specifically to the positions of Manager Family and Community Services, and Recreation Officer.
 - ii. In addition, the position of Superintendent must be filled substantively.
3. The centre should undertake a review of the night staffing arrangements and ensure that the centre is sufficiently staffed at all times. This review should include an analysis of gender patterns of the staffing rosters at Boronia.
4. Ongoing training and awareness raising about grooming and boundary setting should form part of Boronia's staff training schedule. This should be supported by robust policies that stipulate the appropriate levels of interactions between staff and residents at Boronia.

CARE AND WELLBEING

5. The placement of the food items in the colour coding system in the supermarket should be reviewed as part of Boronia's commitment to continuous improvement.
6. Mothers with children residing with them at Boronia should be allowed to accompany their child/children to their child's external medical appointment as a matter of course. This should occur in all instances and be a documented formal procedure.
7. That Boronia provide in-service training to all staff likely to come into contact with children during their normal duties regarding their duty of care, safety, development and protection of children.
8. There is a need to develop satisfactory alternative care arrangements for the care of children should an emergency occur or a mother becomes unable to care for the child.
9. That effective procedures are put in place to ensure better communication and information between DCD, Bandyup and Boronia in matters relating to the care and wellbeing of children. This must include internal information sharing at Boronia so that all staff are alerted to any matters relating to the custody of each child at Boronia.
10. That Boronia ensure that all staff who have regular contact with children obtain a Working with Children Check in accordance with Section 6 of the *Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004*.
11. The procedures for assessing and reviewing the placement of children at Boronia should be even more rigorous. Factors contributing to the rigour of this process could include application of the risk register at all stages of these processes, and more clarity with regard to the role of the Manager Family and Community Services in these processes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

12. That Boronia develop detailed care plans that incorporate the risk assessment matrix provided in Appendix A of Policy Directive 10 for each child residing or staying at Boronia and review these care plans on a regular basis.
 - i. In recognising services for families and children, Boronia must secure ongoing funding for its early years strategy which should include a position for an early years worker in order to reduce the dependency on volunteers for these essential services.
 - ii. As part of parenting support Boronia should encourage both community in-reach and outreach strategies whereby community organisations engage with the women while still at Boronia and provide continuous support to them on release.

REHABILITATION

14. The policy for assessing the security classifications for female offenders in Western Australia should be reviewed as a matter of priority. This review should embrace a women-centred framework that considers the different risks posed by male and female prisoners. A women-centred assessment policy should interpret female offending within the historical context of abuse, neglect, substance use, mental illness, etc, that have been identified as relevant to female offending in the Department's own 'profile of women in custody' surveys.
15. The Department should resource the delivery of programs and/or other interventions at Boronia that specifically address domestic violence and related issues.
16. Written agreements should be developed between the education centre at Boronia and each agency that provides education services at Boronia. These agreements should be specific about the range of the services to be provided and the expectations each party has in relation to the working relationship between the education centre at Boronia and the particular agency concerned.
17. Boronia should work together with the visiting agencies to establish clear lines of communication about the discrete services they provide. An action plan should be developed to ensure the better integration and coordination of these agencies and their services, and the plan should include provision for evaluation of and feedback on these services.

REPARATION

18. The Department should review its perspective on the vast range of activities that fall into the category of reparation, and should work with Boronia to develop and trial a comprehensive measure of reparation taking into account the components of reparation detailed here. This is essential if the Department and Boronia are to work together to achieve meaningful and measurable reparative outcomes.
19. The Section 94 work program at Boronia should be reviewed with particular focus on the following aspects of the program:
 - Increasing the number of residents participating in the program;
 - Increasing the range of community agencies as Section 94 sites as well as the diversity of the services residents are expected to provide; and
 - Improving the quality of the services provided by engaging the skills residents have been equipped with and incorporating these within the duties that are required to be performed.

Appendix 1

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIVE SERVICES' RESPONSE TO THE 2006 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation	Response/Risk Rating
<p>1. Administration and accountability</p> <p>There must be a supportive relationship between the Director of Women's Custodial Services and the centre management. This must also extend to support for an adequate allocation of funding for the centre to enable it to meet the high needs of its prisoner population and to develop new initiatives.</p>	<p>Agree/Low</p> <p>The relationship between the Director Women's Custodial Services and the centre management is strong and has always been viewed as an integral factor in supporting Boronia achieve maximum potential as a pre-release centre for women.</p> <p>Boronia was designed to accommodate 70 prisoners in total. During the two years of planning and development, the Project Control Group (PCG) was cognisant that Boronia's population would not reach 70 in its first few years of operation due to the demand for medium security beds as opposed to minimum. At the time, Nyandi Prison only held between 30 and 35 women. However, the Attorney General was keen to establish a Women's facility that reflected the good practice he saw overseas. Given the amount of community and political resistance to the prison being built in Bentley, it was felt timely and appropriate to build for future capacity. This was the first time the Department built for future projected prisoner numbers.</p> <p>A consultative approach is the model that we have adopted in creating Boronia and we are confident that our strategies are sufficient to see Boronia ultimately meet its built capacity within a best practice framework.</p> <p>There are a number of budget pressures associated with the operation of Boronia.</p>
<p>2. Staffing Issues</p> <p>i. Key positions that remain unfunded at Boronia must be finalised at the earliest opportunity. This recommendation relates specifically to the positions of Manager, Family and Community Services and Recreation Officer.</p>	<p>i. Agree/Low</p> <p>Adult Custodial Division has allocated Boronia the budget it requires to operate effectively for its projected prisoner numbers for 06/07. However, this allocation was not reflected in the Department's overall funding allocation and as such the short-fall presents pressures in the Division as a whole.</p>

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIVE SERVICES' RESPONSE TO THE
2006 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation	Response/Risk Rating
<p>ii. In addition, the position of Superintendent must be filled substantively.</p>	<p>It is anticipated that these positions will be finalised now that the 06/07 budget has been finalised.</p> <p>ii. Disagree/Staffing Issues</p> <p>While we understand the point OICS is making in regard to actin positions within the Department, the system of public service appointments does not support such action.</p> <p>The position of Superintendent is filled substantively, however, the substantive occupant's skills are being utilised in a related area of the business. This provides the opportunity to develop our second tier of prison managers. The acting Superintendent has been in post for some 18 months, affording consistent management of the site for an extended period. It is anticipated that the matter would be resolved in the early part of 2007.</p>

3. Staffing Issues

The Centre should undertake a review of the night staffing arrangements and ensure that the Centre is sufficiently staffed at all times. This review should include an analysis of gender patterns of the staffing rosters at Boronia.

Agree/Low

The Department acknowledges as a valid point the potential lack of female staff on night shift at Boronia.

As Boronia was not a part of the 2004 Staffing Review, a Workforce Planner and Senior HR Consultant within DCS will undertake a review of the staffing and positions nominated during the establishment of this facility.

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIVE SERVICES' RESPONSE TO THE
2006 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation	Response/Risk Rating
<p>4. Staffing Issues</p> <p>Ongoing training and awareness raising about grooming and boundary setting should form part of Boronia's staff training schedule. This should be supported by robust policies that stipulate the appropriate levels of interactions between staff and residents at Boronia.</p>	<p>Agree/Low</p> <p>Women's Custodial services are currently developing a refresher program that builds on entry level training for delivery to existing staff covering the issue of boundary setting when working with women in custody.</p> <p>In addition the corrective Services Training Academy is developing a "Working with Women Offenders" training program that will be distributed to each prison that accommodates women.</p>
<p>5. Care and Wellbeing</p> <p>The placement of the food items in the colour coding system in the supermarket should be reviewed as part of Boronia's commitment to continuous improvement.</p>	<p>Agree/Low</p> <p>The colour coding system is in accordance with the Health Department's healthy eating food pyramid. Upon arrival at Boronia all women are trained in the supporting 'Foodcents' programme with ongoing support available from the catering area. Information sessions on weight management and nutritional advice are also provided to women by the Health Centre.</p> <p>If women wish to eat outside of the Health Department's recommendations (food colour coding system) they are able to do so, however, they must purchase this additional food with their own private cash or gratuity. In line with the Health Department's nutritional recommendations and advice, eating outside of the healthy eating pyramid and diets high in fats, sugars and preservatives are not encouraged.</p> <p>The Department will review the colour coding as a means of continuous improvement in the provision of services to women in custody.</p>

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIVE SERVICES' RESPONSE TO THE
2006 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation	Response/Risk Rating
<p>6. Care and Wellbeing</p> <p>Mothers with children residing with them at Boronia should be allowed to accompany their child/children to their child's external medical appointment as a matter of course. This should occur in all instances and be a documented formal procedure.</p>	<p>Disagree</p> <p>While we understand the principle to which the Inspector refers, we are not able to agree to this action being undertaken as a matter of course or that it should occur in all instances.</p> <p>Decisions on whether a mother accompanies her child to external medical appointments are made on an individual case basis and in consultation with the mother. There are also occasions where this is not legally possible including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• If the child is in the care of the CEO of the Department of community Development; or• If the child is subject to court access condition where prior agreement with the father of the child is required.
<p>7. Care and Wellbeing</p> <p>That Boronia provide in-service training to all staff likely to come into contact with children during their normal duties regarding their duty of care, safety, development and protection of children.</p>	<p>Agree/Moderate</p> <p>Boronia is currently developing a child protections policy and training that will be included in Boronia's ongoing staff training schedule.</p>
<p>8. Care and Wellbeing</p> <p>There is a need to develop satisfactory alternative care arrangements for the care for children should an emergency occur or a mother becomes unable to care for the child.</p>	<p>Agree/Moderate</p> <p>Senior Family Links Officer will conduct review and provide new model for emergency care of children on site. Any new procedures will then be included in the Standing Order B24.</p>

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIVE SERVICES' RESPONSE TO THE
2006 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation	Response/Risk Rating
<p>9. Care and Wellbeing</p> <p>That effective procedures are put in place to ensure better communication and information between DCD, Bandyup and Boronia in matters relating to the care and wellbeing of children. This must include internal information sharing at Boronia so that all staff are alerted to any matters relating to the custody of each child at Boronia.</p>	<p>Agree/Low</p> <p>A Department of Community Development Officer has been appointed by Women's Custodial Services Directorate to assist in the assessment of applications for child residence and extended stays as well as matters relating to the care and wellbeing of children in prisons. The management teams of Bandyup and Boronia meet with a DCD Officer regularly as a group.</p>
<p>10. Care and Wellbeing</p> <p>That Boronia ensure that all staff who have regular contact with children obtain a Working with Children Check in accordance with Section 6 of the Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act.</p>	<p>Agree/Moderate</p> <p>The Department will progress a comprehensive assessment of all functions within Boronia Pre-Release Centre within the intent of the Working With Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act and Regulations with a view to identifying actual and potential screening needs.</p>
<p>11. Care and Wellbeing</p> <p>The procedures for assessing and reviewing the placement of children at Boronia should be even more rigorous. Factors contributing to the rigour of this process could include application of the risk register at all stages of these processes, and more clarify with regard to the role of the Manager, Family and Community Services in these processes.</p>	<p>Agree/Low</p> <p>Boronia currently complies with PD10 regarding the assessment and suitability of children to reside or have extended visits with their mothers/primary care givers. With the commencement of the Senior Family Links Officer (DCD Secondment) a review of this process has commenced to ensure rigour.</p>
<p>12. Care and Wellbeing</p> <p>That Boronia develop detailed care plans that incorporate the risk assessment matrix provided in Appendix A of Policy Directive 10 for each child residing or staying at Boronia and review these care plans on a regular basis.</p>	<p>Agree/Low</p> <p>This process has commenced. Senior Family Links Officer now prepares and reviews Care Plans.</p>

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIVE SERVICES' RESPONSE TO THE
2006 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation	Response/Risk Rating
<p>13. Care and Wellbeing</p>	<p>Agree/Low</p>
<p>i. In recognising services for families and children, Boronia must secure ongoing funding for its early years strategy which should include a position for an early years worker in order to reduce the dependency on volunteers for these essential services.</p>	<p>i. the Early Years strategy is a state initiative and applications for grants can be made to this body. These grants are for a period of 12 months only. Boronia is a recognised Early Years site. This year Ngala's application for funding to provide a parenting programme for Boronia was successful. The intent of the Early Years strategy is that any projects introduced with 12 month funding allocated will be sustainable in the long term without further Early Years money.</p> <p>At Boronia qualified Ngala childcare workers deliver this parenting programme and have committed to continue to fund the programme when the Early Years money has run out.</p>
<p>ii. As part of parenting support Boronia should encourage both community inreach and outreach strategies whereby community organisation engage with the women while still at Boronia and provide continuous support to them on release.</p>	<p>ii. Boronia currently liaises with the following agencies: Wanslea Family Support Services, CLAN Victoria Park, Ngala, and Meerliinga Aboriginal Support Programme. The above agencies visit Boronia and provide information sessions to the residents. Wanslea visits Boronia and provides in-house support to residents who have been assessed by the Manager Family and Community Services as requiring this practical one-on-one parenting support.</p> <p>It is noted that in regard to referrals to community parenting programmes and post release support, the nature of contracted funding agreements for these agencies often precludes community agencies from giving a commitment to work with a resident unless a confirmed post release address is available.</p>

Recommendation	Response/Risk Rating
<p>14. Rehabilitation</p> <p>The policy for assessing the security classifications for female offenders in Western Australia should be reviewed as a matter of priority. This review should embrace a women-centred framework that considers the different risks posed by male and female prisoners. A women-centred assessment policy should interpret female offending within the historical context of abuse, neglect, substance use, mental illness, etc, that have been identified as relevant to female offending in the Department's own 'profile of women in custody' surveys.</p>	<p>Agree/Low</p> <p>The Department of Corrective Services has been funded to conduct a review of the prisoner assessment and classification process (the Review) in accordance with the recommendation of the Mahoney Inquiry.</p> <p>The Review will specifically address Recommendation 19 of the Mahoney Inquiry in that it will determine the need for an assessment and classification process that not only assess risk of escape but the risk of the prisoner re-offending, in particular the risk of violent re-offending and the level of harm that they pose to the community; and make recommendations for future development of the process to achieve this outcome.</p> <p>The Review will also examine whether there is a need for differential assessment and classification requirements throughout the State; and if the current assessment and classification process adequately takes into consideration the differential requirements of women offenders and the unique requirements of indigenous offenders.</p> <p>This Review is in its initial stages with the project documentation been created within the DCS Project Governance Framework.</p>
<p>15. Rehabilitation</p> <p>The Department should resource the delivery of programs and/or interventions that specifically address domestic violence and related issues.</p>	<p>Agree/Low</p> <p>The Reconnections program that had been piloted at both Bandyup and Boronia does address family violence and related issues. Offender Services recognise the importance of Reconnections and there is a plan to review the program and develop an appropriate program manual and supporting documents so that the program can be included in the AIRP programs menu. The Manager of Programs</p>

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIVE SERVICES' RESPONSE TO THE
2006 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation	Response/Risk Rating
	<p>Coordination and Standards will identify available and suitable staff to review the program content, develop the manual and supporting documents and train staff on program delivery etc.</p> <p>There is a commitment to continuously review the PCS staffing level at Boronia and we are working towards an ability to deliver small group needs based programs for women by PCS such as sleep hygiene, mood management, time management etc. Manager Offender Services (Women's Custodial) will follow up with the senior management at Offender Services with regard to preparing a budget submission.</p> <p>There has been discussion about delivery of needs based programs to prisoners with a 6-months-and-less prison term, however, this combined with enhanced PCS support at Boronia would require increased funding and recruitment of appropriately qualified staff to support the delivery of services. Manager Offender Services (Women's Custodial) will follow up with the senior management at Offender Services to prepare a budget submission.</p>

16. Rehabilitation

Written agreements should be developed between the education centre at Boronia and each agency that provides education services at Boronia. These agreements should be specific about the range of the services to be provided and the expectations each party has in relation to the working relationship between the education centre at Boronia and the particular agency concerned.

Agree/Low

Agreements have been documented and are held at the Education Offices at Milligan Street. Managing Director EVTU will write to the agencies to ensure they are current and reflect the range of services to be provided.

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIVE SERVICES' RESPONSE TO THE
2006 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation	Response/Risk Rating
<p>17. Rehabilitation</p> <p>Boronia should work together with the visiting agencies to establish clear lines of communications about the discrete services they provide. An action plan should be developed to ensure the better integration and coordination of these agencies and their services, and the plan should include provision for evaluation of and feedback on these services.</p>	<p>Agree/Low</p> <p>Visiting agencies review to be conducted. Superintendent Boronia will assign project officer to conduct this service review.</p>
<p>18. Reparation</p> <p>The Department should review its perspective on the vast range of activities that fall into the category of reparation, and should work with Boronia to develop and trial a comprehensive measure of reparation taking into account the components of reparation detailed here. This is essential if the Department and Boronia are to work together to achieve meaningful and measurable reparative outcomes.</p>	<p>Agree in part/Low</p> <p>The Department is satisfied with the measure of the contribution to the community of its s94 program, however, Boronia in conjunction with DWCS will review the range of reparative activities from a women's centred perspective.</p>
<p>19. Reparation</p> <p>The section 94 work program at Boronia should be reviewed with particular focus on the following aspects of the program:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Increasing the number of residents participating the program;	<p>Agree in part/Low</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. When Boronia commenced operations, 100% employment was linked with a count of 70 residents. This included provision for section 94 community activities work parties to engage in reparative activities for various not for profit organisations. With current low numbers and having to give priority to everyday functional management activities on site, and taking into consideration those women unable to work in the section 94 work part off site due to traineeships, full time education and mothering responsibilities, women available to participate in these activities is often reduced.

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIVE SERVICES' RESPONSE TO THE
2006 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation	Response/Risk Rating
<p>2. Increasing the range of community agencies as section 94 sites as well as the diversity of the services residents are expected to provide; and</p>	<p>An increase in population will see a natural increase in participation in the section 94 Community Activities programme.</p> <p>2. Current Boronia staffing model sees one officer supervising the section 94 activities (community work activities). On a weekly basis 4 different work sites are visited, with 2 days work given to Good Samaritans.</p> <p>Sites currently being attended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Santa's Workshop, • Foodbank, • RSPCA and • Good Samaritan Industries. <p>In total Boronia has Ministerial approval for 14 various community work locations and when requested will provide a service for these organisations.</p>
<p>3. Improving the quality of the services provided by engaging the skills residents have been equipped with and incorporating these within the duties that are required to be performed.</p>	<p>3. Services provided are directly linked with the requirements of the agencies supported by Boronia and not necessarily high skills based, however valued by the agencies nonetheless. In addition women at Boronia are given choices in regard to which work activity they wish to engage with. Women with higher skills often make choices to take on traineeships or full time education on site.</p> <p>Women also have an opportunity to engage in reparative activities in an indirect manner and not directly by the way of the section 94 work party. After work hours women, in their own time, use their skills to make goods for sale at the Gala Day which sees profits returned directly to the community.</p>

Appendix 2

INSPECTION TEAM

Mr Robert Stacey	Acting Inspector of Custodial Services
Mr Bill Cullen	Acting Deputy Inspector
Ms Kati Kraszlan	Manager, Inspections and Research
Mr John Acres	Senior Inspections and Research Officer
Ms Lauren Netto	Inspections and Research Officer
Ms Fiona Paskulich	Inspections and Research Officer
Ms Vivien Hubbard	Inspections and Research Officer (Seconded from the Department of Corrective Services)
Ms Teresa Hutchings	Expert Adviser Child Care Consultant, Edith Cowan University
Dr Mary Cameron	Expert Adviser General Practitioner
Ms Anne Donaldson	Expert Adviser Office of Health Review
Ms Donna Laing	Expert Adviser Office of Health Review
Ms Jo Merrick	Expert Adviser Ombudsman's Office
Ms Cheryl Wiltshire	Expert Adviser Department of Education and Training
Ms Diane Broadby	Manager Community Relations
Mr Joseph Wallam	Community Liaison Officer

Appendix 3

KEY DATES

Formal notification of announced inspection	29 March 2006
Start of on site phase	11 June 2006
Completion of on site phase	22 June 2006
Inspection exit debrief	23 June 2006
Draft Report sent to the Department of Corrective Services	26 September 2006
Draft report returned by the Department of Corrective Services	7 November 2006
Declaration of Prepared Report	21 December 2006



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