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OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR OF CUSTODIAL SERVICES

REPORT OF AN ANNOUNCED INSPECTION OF  
WOOROLOO PRISON FARM



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

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# The Inspector's Overview

## WOOROLOO PRISON FARM: A RE-ENTRY FACILITY OR JUST ANOTHER OVERCROWDED PRISON?

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Wooroloo Prison Farm has an interesting history. The buildings, most of which are heritage-listed, began life in the early Twentieth Century as a sanatorium. After a period as the local hospital, it became a minimum-security prison farm in the 1970's. Lacking the traditional prison fence, it had the outward appearance of just another farming property on the outskirts of the small town of Wooroloo. The prison worked hard to ensure good relations with the local community, sharing with it many of its facilities such as the prison officers' social club. There were also numerous other interactions around sporting activities and other events.

For prisoners, it provided an opportunity to finish their prison sentence working on a farm in a less institutional regime that required more self-discipline and thereby better prepared them for release. That said, there was no doubt it was a prison and tough consequences including security upgrades, additional prison time and reduced prospects of parole applied to prisoners who escaped.

In his Overview to the Report of the 2006 Inspection<sup>i</sup>, Professor Richard Harding wrote that 'everything about the regime' pointed to Wooroloo successfully fulfilling its role as a releasing prison – including good staff/prisoner interaction, skilling opportunities and strong contacts with the outside world. Overall, he said, it was 'the best male prison in the State'. In other words, it had a clear place in the system (as primarily a 're-entry' or 'pre-release' facility) and it was performing to a high standard.

At the time of this inspection in April 2009, many good things were still happening. For example, the prison continues to offer significant (but increasingly stretched) re-entry services; education and training opportunities have improved and employment levels are high; the prison maintains good contacts with external agencies; visiting and recreational arrangements are excellent; and there are some positive features to the Kellerberrin Work Camp.

However, we found that other areas had slipped back and that the prison's overall performance had declined markedly over the preceding three years. The reasons for Wooroloo's decline and for the uncertainty over its future direction are complex and are explored in detail throughout the report. However, there are five main factors, all of which are inter-related: overcrowding in the State's prison system; the building of the perimeter fence (completed in 2007); staffing issues; staff /prisoner interactions; and ambivalence about the prison's role.

### OVERCROWDING AND APPROPRIATE ACCOMMODATION

Wooroloo's population has increased over time and is projected to increase further. At the time of our first inspection in 2002, the official capacity was 160 and in 2006 it was 206. At the time of this Inspection, the official capacity was 250 but the prison held 270 prisoners (the extra 20 being accommodated in double bunks). The current population is around 280. In response to system-wide overcrowding, the plan is to bring the population up to 360 by late 2009/early 2010 through a combination of double bunks and additional

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i Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services, *Report of An Announced Inspection of Wooroloo Prison Farm – April 2006*, Report No 39 (January 2007).

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accommodation. Wooroloo's capacity will therefore have more than doubled in just seven years.<sup>ii</sup>

Overcrowding is often measured by reference to the gap between official capacity and the actual number of beds. *However, it is not just a question of beds.* When prisoner numbers increase, existing infrastructure (including plumbing, telephones and kitchens) comes under stress. Facilities for health services, recreation, visits, education, programs and work are almost invariably at capacity when the prison is at official capacity levels and investment in these critical areas will rarely, if ever, keep pace with increased beds. Ultimately, such pressures mean that prisons become less able to play a positive role in reducing recidivism. Furthermore, pressure on staff increases as do concerns about personal safety. We saw ample evidence of all these pressures at Wooroloo and there is no evidence of them abating.

Recommendation 2 reflects these concerns. In particular, it would appear that double-bunking in cells designed for single occupancy is increasingly being treated as an accepted norm rather than a temporary necessity. Recommendation 2 states as follows:

The multiple occupancy of prisoners in cells not designed for that purpose should not be an accepted accommodation model for prisons in Western Australia. Where this is temporarily unavoidable, compensatory measures should be implemented to mitigate risk and disadvantage.

The Department's response to the first part of Recommendation 2 is frank and sobering:

The Department aims to manage the prisoner population in appropriate accommodation, however given current population pressures this is both impractical and impossible.

In other words, *the State acknowledges that some prisoners are being managed in inappropriate accommodation.*

The response goes on to say that the Department is working towards greater capacity and that it is anticipated that in the long term this will alleviate the pressure. However, it is difficult to share such optimism when current demand already outstrips the projected capacity from new purpose built places such as the new Derby and Eastern Goldfields prisons, extensions to Acacia Prison and the redesigned Rangeview Remand Centre.<sup>iii</sup>

Although recent media attention has focused mainly on increased prisoner numbers over the past 12 months (since the election of the Liberal government), it must be emphasised that the problems date back much further and that this is a bipartisan issue. The prison

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ii A recent dramatic tightening up of the parole system has resulted in far fewer prisoners being granted parole. These changes were only beginning to take effect at the time of the inspection but have a profound impact, especially when added to other pressures.

iii Rangeview is to be redeveloped as a facility for 18-22 year old males and its current juvenile population will be transferred to Banksia Hill Detention Centre: see Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services, *Remodelling Corrections for Juveniles and Young Men*, Issues Paper No 2, August 2009. Rangeview will have a capacity (largely double-bunked) of 80. Derby will have a capacity of around 150 and Eastern Goldfields is projected to add around 250 extra beds. The total across the three facilities will therefore be around 480. The State's prisoner population increased by around 650 in the first eight months of 2009.

## WOOROLOO PRISON FARM: A RE-ENTRY FACILITY OR JUST ANOTHER OVERCROWDED PRISON?

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population grew by around 30 per cent under the previous Labor administration without significant investment in additional accommodation.

Overcrowding brings risks to prisons and disadvantages to prisoners. Recommendation 2, in line with internationally accepted standards, argues that there should be compensatory measures at times of overcrowding.<sup>iv</sup> ‘Compensations’ are not designed to be ‘soft on prisoners’ but are intended to reduce risks to security and control as well as to redress areas of disadvantage. Potential options include more out of cell time and more opportunities for access to recreation, education and other positive activities. Unfortunately, as already alluded to, it is quite likely that access to such activities will actually drop back (because infrastructure needs do not keep pace with the extra beds) and that risks may therefore increase. We will continue to examine such issues in the course of future inspections.<sup>v</sup> It is also possible that current pressures will attract judicial attention in sentencing cases.<sup>vi</sup>

### CULTURE, STAFFING AND THE FENCE

From its beginnings in the 1970’s, the prison farm established a regime that lacked the tensions of security prisons and encouraged prisoners to work on developing skills and preparing for their release. Positive staff and prisoner relationships were central to this as officers worked alongside prisoners to get work done. However, during this Inspection, we found a marked decline in staff/prisoner interactions. This was clearly evident from discussions with staff and prisoners and was re-affirmed by numerous abrasive announcements made over the public address system.

Three factors have particularly contributed to the decline:<sup>vii</sup>

- The construction of the fence has led to a perception that Wooroloo is no longer a minimum-security facility. More staff time is taken up with perimeter security and less time with interacting with prisoners. And although we found no clear evidence to support this, staff also believe the prison is now housing a worse group of prisoners.
- During the two years prior to the Inspection, the prison had suffered some severe and prolonged staff shortages.

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iv See Standard 21 of the Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services, *Code of Inspection Standards for Adult Custodial Services*.

v The Department’s response was as follows: ‘During times of high prison populations, like what is currently being experienced (sic), strategies are employed to mitigate risk to individual (sic) and facilities as a whole’. However, this does not identify the actual strategies that will be employed or whether compensatory measures form part of that strategy.

vi To date, sentencing courts have been hesitant to take account of arguments to the effect that a person is likely to undergo more onerous conditions or to be unable to access minimum security as reasons for reducing a sentence. Their reasoning is that sentence administration is a matter for the executive and the courts do not control prisoner assessment and placement. However, if harsher conditions and inappropriate accommodation become a predictable commonplace norm, there may be a greater chance of judicial weight being given to such arguments: see *Bekink v R* [1999] WASCA 160; *de la Espriella-Velasco v The Queen* [2006] WASCA 31; *Cohen v State of Western Australia [No 2]* [2007] WASCA 279. It is already well-established that ‘particular hardship and deprivation for an individual prisoner by reason of matters subjective to that prisoner is a matter which may properly be taken into account by a sentencing Judge’; *Houghton v State of Western Australia* [2006] WASCA 143.

vii See Chapter Two.

## WOOROLOO PRISON FARM: A RE-ENTRY FACILITY OR JUST ANOTHER OVERCROWDED PRISON?

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- The substantive Superintendent had been away from the prison for most of the period since the last inspection and had only just returned. This had resulted in a lack of sure and stable leadership and deteriorating communications between staff and management and between different staff levels.

These issues and concerns have been exacerbated by the overcrowding pressures.

### RECOMMENDATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Overall, we found mixed views about Wooroloo's place in the total system. Some staff continued to see it as a pre-release facility but others said it was really 'just another prison.' In our view, Wooroloo, even with expanded capacity, should be a pre-release facility and the resources should be made available to allow it to perform this role and to return to its previous high levels of performance. Our recommendations were made in this spirit.

In order to ensure the strategic focus and practical value of our reports, we make two types of recommendation. The main recommendations relate not only to the prison itself but also to Head Office and the government. We also include a list of locally remediable matters which are directed to the prison itself.

It is pleasing to report a generally positive response to both sets of recommendations. For its part, the Department has provided not only a response but also a timeframe for implementation.<sup>viii</sup> Furthermore the projected timeframes are relatively short. The Superintendent has also embraced all the recommendations and is already taking action on the locally remediable issues and other areas within his control.

Nevertheless, I remain particularly concerned at the sobering response to Recommendation 2. There are profound system-wide implications in the statement that it has become 'impractical and impossible' to 'manage the prisoner population in appropriate accommodation'.

Neil Morgan  
Inspector of Custodial Services  
7 September 2009

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viii This format is preferable to the previous process of 'risk ratings': see Overview to the *Report of An Announced Inspection of Albany Regional Prison*, Report No 60 (April 2009).



# Summary of Findings and Recommendations

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In April 2009 the Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services (the Office) carried out the third announced inspection of Wooroloo Prison Farm. For the vast majority of prisoners housed there, Wooroloo will be their final place of incarceration prior to re-entering the community. As such, Wooroloo is a 're-entry prison' and its primary role should be to provide prisoners with the best possible preparation for release and thereby reduce the likelihood of their re-offending.

Historically, Wooroloo has been a well-performing facility and at the previous inspection in 2006, the prison was found to be operating at a particularly high standard. Unfortunately, the 2009 inspection identified a significant decline in performance at Wooroloo. While some pockets of good performance remain, many more operational areas are not performing to their full potential.

## DECLINE IN PERFORMANCE: SYMPTOMS AND CAUSES

The most significant issue was the marked degradation of the relationship between prison officers and prisoners. The inspection team's observation while at the prison was that interaction between prison officers and prisoners was very limited. While there were certainly some officers who continued to engage positively and regularly with prisoners, many uniformed staff were neither proactively communicating nor making themselves easily accessible to prisoners.

For a re-entry prison like Wooroloo, positive interaction is particularly important. The creation of a supportive and pro-social environment plays a vital part in preparing prisoners for a successful return to the community.

### *Recommendation 1*

*The prison should improve the level and standard of interaction between staff and prisoners.*

It is important to recognise that there are many factors contributing to the deteriorated relationship between officers and prisoners. In the three years since the previous inspection, Wooroloo has had to manage an extensive program of capital works, including erection of a secure perimeter fence and gatehouse. There has also been a significant increase in prisoner numbers from 211 in 2006 to 270 in 2009. The Department has also commenced a project to renovate and refurbish unused buildings at Wooroloo in order to increase the capacity of the prison to 360 within 12 months. Of particular interest to this Office is the introduction of widespread double-bunking for the first time at Wooroloo.

This Office is extremely concerned that double-bunking is becoming the accepted standard for prisoner accommodation in Western Australia. The standard accommodation capacities presented to this Office by the Department of Corrective Services (the Department) have begun, on occasion, to incorporate doubled-up cells as the standard capacity. This is not acceptable and normalisation of double-bunking within the Department must not be allowed. Double-bunking presents a serious risk to safety, decency and management regimes.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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### *Recommendation 2*

*The multiple occupancy of prisoners in cells not designed for that purpose should not be an accepted accommodation model for prisons in Western Australia. Where this is temporarily unavoidable, compensatory processes should be implemented to mitigate risk and disadvantage.*

There had been a loss of direction and focus on Wooroloo's role as a re-entry prison both within the Department and to some extent within the prison itself. This was exacerbated by the extended absence of the substantive Superintendent and associated instability in the senior management team. As a result, the prison's ability to articulate its own goals was weakened, staff received less direction and there was no clear communication of what the expectations are for officers in a minimum security environment.

In fact, communication between staff was generally poor. There were rarely any meetings involving all staff, and some staffing groups felt that they were not represented at management meetings. At the unit level, prison officers viewed unit meetings as tokenistic and a method of handing out orders rather than a genuine information-sharing and interactive experience. With the challenges that Wooroloo faces in the near future, it is essential that regular and genuine methods of information-sharing and consultation are established in all areas of the prison.

### *Recommendation 3*

*The prison should establish a communication strategy to ensure regular, accurate and comprehensive communication of information both up and down the reporting lines for staff.*

Since the 2006 inspection, Wooroloo has faced severe shortages of custodial staff and staff were concerned that the staffing levels in the prison were not sufficient to manage the increasing number of prisoners accommodated. This was particularly evident in the workshops, where some Vocational Support Officers were routinely required to supervise large groups of prisoners that exceeded approved staff/prisoner ratios. As a result, staff were becoming increasingly concerned about personal safety.

Non-custodial staff felt similarly over-worked as a result of managing increased prisoner numbers without requisite increases in resources. There was concern that the proposed capacity increase would be implemented without proper consideration given to the impact that it would have on all areas in the prison, from health and education through to the cashier and visit booking services. The current fragile state of the prison makes it imperative that staffing and resourcing requirements in all areas are determined and implemented well in advance of the proposed capacity increase.

### *Recommendation 4*

*The Department should ensure that all operational areas at Wooroloo Prison Farm are adequately resourced in anticipation of the proposed capacity increase.*

In its current state the prison is not ready to absorb an additional 90 prisoners within 12 months as proposed. Nevertheless, this Office is confident that Wooroloo is capable of

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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improving its performance and regaining its rightful place as one of the better performing prisons in the state. If the prison is to restore its previous level of performance while at the same time preparing for a significant increase in prisoner numbers, local management will need strong support from the Department. At the time of the inspection, it was anticipated that all forward planning for the proposed capacity increase would be carried out by the existing senior management team at Wooroloo, and the Department had no plans to provide additional resources or assistance. Given the challenges that prison management face in dealing with some of the identified issues, it is essential that there are adequate staff in the senior management team to resolve existing issues and to prepare the prison for the proposed capacity increase.

### *Recommendation 5*

*The Department should provide additional staffing on the senior management team at Wooroloo Prison Farm until such time as the prison returns to its previous high level of performance and is prepared for the proposed capacity increase.*

## PREPARING PRISONERS FOR RELEASE

Case management was being promoted strongly at the local level by the Case Management Coordinator with support from senior management. However, these efforts were being undermined by the lack of commitment to case management at head office level. The Case Management Coordinator and the assessments team were generally meeting their deadlines in relation to prisoners' Individual Management Plans, but the rising prisoner population had increased their workload, as had new initiatives such as the Prisoner Employment Program. Extra resources are needed in this area, particularly in light of the proposed capacity increase.

Although the level of rehabilitative program delivery at Wooroloo was far better than 12 months earlier, it was still not meeting the demands of the prisoner population. Poor communication from the programs branch at head office meant that Wooroloo management were not well-informed about the programs running in the prison, and struggled to get fundamental information such as scheduled starting dates.

Education was being delivered well at Wooroloo, and the service had in fact been considerably improved and expanded following the construction of a new education and programs centre. There were concerns about the number of staff on casual and fixed term contracts and the potential for budget cuts in the current economic climate. It is the firm view of this Office that any reduction in funding and resourcing levels for education would be a grievous backwards step.

Wooroloo has a very strong focus on prisoner employment and consistently maintains an employment rate of over 95 per cent. However, this was under threat as a result of the ever-increasing prisoner population and there was a need to review staffing levels in all of the industrial areas and workshops. The gratuities system was a great source of frustration for both staff and prisoners and seemed ineffective at providing incentives for hard work.

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The visits regime at Wooroloo was one of the best-performing areas of the prison. The atmosphere during visits was positive and relaxed, and it was clear that facilitating family and social contact remains a priority for staff and management. In contrast, poor access to telephones was an ongoing source of tension and stress for prisoners. Given the importance of prisoners maintaining outside contact and relationships, particularly as they approach release, there is a need to increase the availability of telephones for all prisoners. Similarly, the level of understanding of the video visits system amongst prisoners and staff was quite low. The failure to promote the use of video visits within the prison is a lost opportunity, particularly for those prisoners from regional and remote areas.

*Recommendation 6*

*The prison should maximise opportunities for prisoners to maintain contact with family and friends. For example, by increasing the number and availability of telephones, promoting the use of video visits, and other innovations.*

#### SERVICE DELIVERY THROUGHOUT THE PRISON

The standard of health care at Wooroloo remains good and prisoners were generally happy with services provided. However, a reduction in nursing staff combined with increasing prisoner numbers may well have a negative impact on the future provision of medical services.

Recreation was undoubtedly one of the strongest areas of the prison, with the opportunity for prisoners to leave the prison grounds to play sport a clear highlight. There can be few better ways to help a prisoner reintegrate into the community.

There was no evidence that Aboriginal prisoners were experiencing disadvantage, and indeed they were proportionately represented in all areas of the prison. However, the prison was not receiving adequate service from the Aboriginal Visitors Scheme with the allotted two hours per week clearly not enough for the visitors to carry out their role.

#### KELLERBERRIN WORK CAMP

The Kellerberrin Work Camp offered prisoners limited access to services such as health, education and training, rehabilitative programs and re-entry services. The facilities are in poor condition and in need of repair and ongoing maintenance. It was clear that many of the issues had not been addressed due to continuing uncertainty surrounding the future of the work camp.

Despite the relatively impoverished conditions, prisoners at the work camp were happy and had good relationships with the work camp officers. The work carried out by the work camp prisoners is highly valued by the local communities and represents a very real opportunity for prisoners to provide reparation to the community.

# Fact Page

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## **NAME OF FACILITY**

Wooroloo Prison Farm

## **ROLE OF FACILITY**

Minimum security prison for adult males

## **LOCATION**

55 kilometres north-east of Perth

The traditional owners of the land are the Nyoongar people

## **BRIEF HISTORY**

Wooroloo Prison Farm was built in 1915 as a sanatorium for patients with tuberculosis and leprosy. In the 1960s, the institution became a general hospital for the surrounding district. The hospital closed in 1970 and the Department of Corrective Services took over the site in 1972. The prison buildings are listed on the State Register of Heritage Places. Construction of a perimeter fence was completed at Wooroloo in 2007.

## **DESIGN CAPACITY OF PRISON**

250

## **NUMBER OF PRISONERS HELD**

270

## **LAST INSPECTION**

2-7 April 2006

## **DESCRIPTION OF RESIDENTIAL UNITS**

Unit 1A	44 standard beds
Unit 2A	24 self-care beds
Unit 3A	25 semi-self-care beds
Unit 2B	59 standard beds and 7 semi-self-care beds
Unit 3B	11 self-care beds
Unit 1C	62 standard beds and 18 semi-self-care beds

The additional 20 prisoners above the design capacity of the prison were accommodated in double-bunks in Unit 1C.



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# Chapter 1

## INTRODUCTION

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- 1.1 In April 2009, the Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services (the Office) carried out the third announced inspection of Wooroloo Prison Farm. Wooroloo is a minimum security facility for adult males and typically accommodates prisoners in the last part of their sentence prior to release. The vast majority of prisoners housed there will be released within months of arriving, and Wooroloo will be their final place of incarceration prior to re-entering the community. As such, Wooroloo is a ‘re-entry prison’ and its primary role should be to provide prisoners with the best possible preparation for release and thereby reduce the likelihood of their re-offending. As a re-entry prison, all aspects of service delivery at Wooroloo should in some way contribute to or support the successful reintegration of prisoners into the community. One of the key objectives for this inspection was to investigate the extent to which this role is defined and supported at the prison and within the Department of Corrective Services (the Department).
- 1.2 Historically, Wooroloo has been a well-performing facility and at the previous inspection in 2006, the prison was found to be operating at a particularly high standard. In fact, in the report of that inspection (published in January 2007) the Inspector classed Wooroloo as ‘the best male adult prison in the state’.<sup>1</sup> Some of the key findings that contributed to this positive assessment included that management had a clear understanding of their processes and objectives; a strong sense of fairness was evident in the prison’s dealings with staff and prisoners; there was very good interaction between staff and prisoners; and ‘everything about the regime’ pointed to Wooroloo successfully filling its role as a re-entry prison.<sup>2</sup>
- 1.3 In the three years since the 2006 inspection, there have been two significant changes that threatened to impact upon the continued good performance of the prison. The first is the erection of a perimeter fence around the prison which had previously been notable for its openness and accessibility. The fence was under construction but not yet operational during the 2006 inspection, and at that time Wooroloo staff were already expressing concerns that fencing the prison would negatively impact upon its minimum security atmosphere and philosophy. The original decision to build the fence was made by the then Minister for Corrective Services at a time of elevated community concerns and political pressure as a result of the Mahoney Inquiry, but there is little point in discussing the relative merits and deficits of that decision. The fence is now a reality for Wooroloo Prison Farm.
- 1.4 The second significant development at Wooroloo since 2006 has been a substantial increase in the number of prisoners accommodated. In 2006, the approved population capacity of Wooroloo was 206 prisoners. In 2009, this had risen to 250 prisoners. On the basis of Wooroloo’s strong showing at the last inspection, it was hoped that the prison was resilient enough to withstand the threat that both of these changes posed to its positive and relaxed atmosphere.
- 1.5 Unfortunately, the prison has not emerged from these challenges unscathed. The 2009 inspection found that the performance of Wooroloo Prison Farm had deteriorated

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1 Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services (OICS), *Report of an Announced Inspection of Wooroloo Prison Farm*, Report No. 39 (January 2007), iii.

2 Ibid.

## INTRODUCTION

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substantially. It was regrettably evident that the fencing of the prison and the increase in prisoner numbers have had a detrimental effect on the functioning of the prison and undeniably contributed to its decline in performance.

- 1.6 The most significant issue, and the one that perhaps underlies all others within the prison, was the marked degradation of the relationship between prison officers and prisoners. Interaction was limited and prisoners expressed deep frustration at the manner in which officers treated them. The inspection team was left in no doubt that the level of interaction between officers and prisoners fell far below the standard expected of any prison, let alone a minimum security releasing prison such as Wooroloo.
- 1.7 The inspection identified various possible causes for this decline in performance. The most serious of these was the severe shortage of custodial staff that the prison had experienced on a prolonged basis between 2006 and 2009. This led to extensive use of overtime shifts within the prison, and inevitably contributed to staff burnout. Wooroloo was also forced to rely regularly on officers from other prisons to fill vacant positions on the roster. These officers typically came from higher security prisons, and this in itself threatened to undermine the minimum security culture of good interaction with prisoners.
- 1.8 This threat was compounded by long-term instability in Wooroloo's senior management team. At a time when the prison needed strong and stable leadership, it instead had to deal with the prolonged absence of its substantive Superintendent. There are serious implications for Wooroloo's core business of preparing prisoners for release, but also for all other areas of service delivery within the prison. While some pockets of good performance remain, many more operational areas are under-performing.
- 1.9 At Wooroloo, these issues are all the more apparent because they represent such a marked decline in performance since the previous inspection in 2006. Chapter 2 of this report will discuss in more detail the particulars of this decline in performance and attempt to identify causes and contributing factors. Chapter 3 examines the impact of this decline in performance on Wooroloo's core business of preparing prisoners for release and assesses the extent to which the prison has been able to maintain its focus on this outcome. Chapter 4 looks more widely at the standard of delivery of other services throughout the prison. Finally, Chapter 5 deals specifically with the Kellerberrin Work Camp and its relationship with Wooroloo Prison Farm.



# Chapter 2

## DECLINE IN PERFORMANCE: SYMPTOMS AND CAUSES

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### THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STAFF AND PRISONERS

- 2.1 Positive relationships between staff and prisoners are crucial to the smooth operation of a custodial facility. Frequent staff and prisoner interaction is vital to the concept of dynamic security and a prison in which prisoners and staff positively interact will be safer for all concerned. For a re-entry prison like Wooroloo, positive interaction is particularly beneficial. The creation of a supportive and pro-social environment plays an important part in preparing prisoners for a successful return to the community. Prisoners approaching release will typically have higher needs and require support from staff to arrange a multitude of matters such as post-release accommodation, employment and financial assistance. Prisoners should feel comfortable approaching staff and confident that assistance will be received.
- 2.2 In the past, Wooroloo has excelled in this area. The 2006 inspection found that ‘Wooroloo demonstrated a high degree of concern for the care and wellbeing of its prisoners and a genuine effort on the part of management and staff members to address the needs of prisoners, both as a group and as individuals’.<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately, in 2009, this was a key area in which Wooroloo had suffered a dramatic downturn.
- 2.3 The Office carried out confidential surveys of both prisoners and staff prior to the on-site phase of the 2009 inspection. From the prisoner survey, there emerged a strong sense of frustration at poor treatment and lack of respect shown by staff.
- 2.4 The inspection team’s observation while at the prison was that interaction between prison officers and prisoners was very limited. While there were certainly some officers who continued to engage positively and regularly with prisoners, the vast majority were neither proactively communicating with prisoners nor making themselves easily accessible to prisoners. For the most part, they seemed to confine themselves to the unit offices. While a strong security presence is not expected in a minimum security prison, it was nevertheless disconcerting to walk around the site without seeing a single officer. It was even rarer to find an officer actively interacting with a prisoner.
- 2.5 This absence of meaningful interaction was further illustrated by the fact that staff members from other areas of the prison (namely administration, education, industries and re-entry services) were more and more frequently dealing with prisoner enquiries that should have been resolved by unit officers. While this indicates that staff in these areas are maintaining good relationships with prisoners, it also highlights the breakdown in communication at the unit level.
- 2.6 More concerning still were the frequent complaints from prisoners about the way they were treated by officers. Prisoners feel they have earned the right to be in a minimum security prison through good behaviour and as a result expect to be treated with more respect by officers. However, many prisoners at Wooroloo expressed the opinion that they were treated better by staff at higher security prisons. This was a great source of frustration. A number of prisoners also explained that they had come to Wooroloo hoping for a relaxed

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3 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Wooroloo Prison Farm*, Report No. 39 (January 2007) 18.

atmosphere where they could settle into a stable lifestyle in preparation for their re-entry into the community. Instead they claimed that the lack of respect and unfair treatment from staff was causing them increased stress and agitation. This was a widespread perception among the prisoner group.

- 2.7 One of the most readily apparent symptoms of the poor interaction between officers and prisoners was the public address system used to relay announcements via speakers placed throughout the prison. It was the accepted method of calling prisoners to appointments (such as medical appointments or meetings with external service providers) but was also used for more general broadcasting of information. During the inspection week the following collective threat was also heard: ‘there will be repercussions for all prisoners unless the cleaning chemicals are returned to the unit office’. The public address system is an intrusive and impersonal way to communicate. In situations where a prisoner needs to be located, it would be more appropriate to contact the relevant unit office and ask unit officers to find the prisoner. By using the public address system instead, the opportunity for valuable interaction is lost. Prisoners sometimes had little or no understanding of why they had been summoned over the public address system and arrived for appointments unaware and unprepared.
- 2.8 This Office does understand that the nature of the minimum security regime at Wooroloo can at times make it difficult to locate a particular prisoner; and a public address system will therefore always be a necessity. However, it should not be used as the primary form of communication between staff and prisoners. It is further suggested that if prison officers were interacting more regularly with the prisoners in their unit they would be better placed to know where those prisoners are at any given time.
- 2.9 The drastic degeneration of the relationship between prison officers and prisoners at Wooroloo has not been without cause. The remainder of this chapter is devoted to exploring the many challenges that have confronted staff at Wooroloo since the 2006 inspection, including physical changes to the prison environment, increases in the prisoner population, instability in the prison management team and significant shortages of staff. For all staff at Wooroloo, it has been a demanding and frustrating period. This has inevitably affected the treatment of prisoners and left staff with little energy or enthusiasm for actively engaging with prisoners.
- 2.10 The poor relationship between staff and prisoners was the single most pervasive and damaging issue identified during the inspection. As such, it is undoubtedly the most important issue to remedy for the future success of the prison. Any improvements in this area will be difficult to quantify, but at the same time easily recognisable by anyone familiar with the prison, not least those who work and reside there.

*Recommendation 1*

*The prison should improve the level and standard of interaction between staff and prisoners.*

## CAPITAL WORKS

- 2.11 Since 2006, Wooroloo Prison Farm has undergone an extensive program of capital works. Most notable, of course, has been the erection of the perimeter fence, but the prison has also seen the construction of several new buildings, including a new reception, health centre, education centre, and self-care accommodation unit. These new facilities will be discussed in more detail in the relevant sections of this report, but they have all been of immense benefit to the prison and provided considerable improvements to service delivery.
- 2.12 Any building project inside a prison, however, causes disruption and puts added pressure on staff. It must be recognised that the scale of the building program at Wooroloo in the last three years has been strenuous for staff and demanding of their time.

### The fence

- 2.13 Similarly, the erection of the perimeter fence and gatehouse, in itself an enormous capital works project, has affected the prison on a number of levels. Most positively, it has limited the number of opportunistic escapes and intrusions from outside the prison. It has not, however, entirely eliminated escapes. After the fence was completed in 2007, three prisoners escaped from the industrial workshops which are situated outside the fence. Around 40 per cent of prisoners at Wooroloo move outside the fence for work on a daily basis so it is clear that the fence alone cannot prevent escapes. Dynamic security remains as essential in the era of the fence as it ever was before.
- 2.14 Officers are now required to spend more time on routine security roles (including fence checks and gatehouse activities). Significantly, when the fence was built the only additional custodial staff that the prison received were allocated to the gatehouse and control room. The two officers that had previously manned the duty room were also transferred to the gatehouse. This effectively meant that there were fewer prison officers available to prisoners inside the prison.
- 2.15 Another negative outcome of constructing the fence has been the almost complete cessation of interaction between the prison and the local community. Wooroloo had previously been quite remarkable for its high level of integration with the local community. A number of prison facilities (including the squash courts and social club) were used by members of the community and this was a valuable feature of the prison that assisted in the resocialisation of prisoners. With the construction of the fence, this community integration has disappeared and facilities are no longer shared.
- 2.16 This leads to the final point about the fence which relates to its effect on the overall atmosphere of the prison. As the Inspector noted in his exit debrief at the 2009 inspection, the introduction of a fence 'will almost inevitably have some impact on the feel and philosophy of a prison'.<sup>4</sup> A wide range of staff, prisoners, external service providers and visitors felt that the fence had been detrimental to the traditionally positive and relaxed atmosphere of the prison. There was a feeling that Wooroloo is now a secure prison and

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4 Inspector of Custodial Services, *Exit Debrief – Wooroloo Prison Farm* (24 April 2009) 3.

no longer a truly minimum security facility. In a sense, these perceptions become self-fulfilling because the way that people feel about a prison will naturally influence the general atmosphere of the place.

- 2.17 The challenge for staff now is to recover from the impact of the fence and restore as far as possible the original atmosphere of the prison. However, as will be seen below, there are a number of other factors that have combined to weaken the prison and leave it vulnerable.

#### INCREASED PRISONER POPULATION

- 2.18 At the time of the first inspection of Wooroloo in 2002 the approved capacity of the prison was 160 prisoners. At the second inspection in 2006, the approved capacity was 206. In 2009, the approved capacity was 250 but during the week of the inspection Wooroloo accepted an additional 20 prisoners because of system-wide prisoner population pressures (bringing the total population at Wooroloo to 270). This meant that Wooroloo's prisoner population had increased by 31 per cent since 2006.
- 2.19 The Department also has plans (and works are under way) to renovate and refurbish unused buildings at Wooroloo in order to increase the capacity of the prison to 360. This project was scheduled for completion by the end of 2009, which would equate to a population increase of more than 70 per cent in less than four years. Alarming, from the time of the inaugural inspection in 2002 to the projected population at the end of 2009, Wooroloo's capacity will have increased by 125 per cent.
- 2.20 Changes of such magnitude will inevitably impact on a prison's operations. At Wooroloo, that impact has been tangible and is a cause for real concern. The pressure placed on staff, resources, processes and prisoners cannot be understated. Such extensive changes demand detailed forward planning and particular support is required to ensure that the prison is able to maintain focus on its purpose and continue to achieve its objectives. Unfortunately, in the case of Wooroloo, the constant population expansion without commensurate resourcing has impaired the prison's capacity to keep its purpose and objectives clear.
- 2.21 The plan to increase the population of Wooroloo to 360 prisoners by 2010 raises a number of issues. Given the already low levels of interaction between prisoners and staff, an increasing population will result in more pressure on officers with increased prisoners to manage. The concern is that the increase in prisoner numbers will make any form of case management or positive engagement extremely difficult. The concept of hierarchical management will also fail as there will be limited opportunity to reward prisoners by moving them to self-care or semi self-care. This is not to mention the pressures on the infrastructure of the prison.
- 2.22 Providing additional beds is the most basic aspect of prisoner accommodation planning, but other infrastructure needs, staffing requirements and support services are just as important. At Wooroloo, these additional necessities have not been adequately provided. The shortfall in staffing is discussed below, but the prison also suffers from deficiencies in basic amenities such as showers and telephones. Even at current population levels these amenities are

not meeting demand. If Wooroloo is to fulfil its role as a re-entry prison into the future, addressing these issues will be vital.

- 2.23 Inclusive planning for the proposed increase to 360 prisoners had only just recommenced with the return of the substantive Superintendent. A working group had been convened prior to the return of the Superintendent in order to identify core infrastructure and services required as part of the population expansion. However, the group had progressed no further than an initial meeting. It is essential that an inclusive process for this is reinvigorated as a matter of priority.
- 2.24 Staff members felt that population management was threatening to overwhelm the purpose and function of the prison. All aspects of the job were overshadowed by the prospect of receiving even more prisoners. As the population increases and staff feel increasingly overwhelmed, they are more likely to disengage from prisoners. The original unit management model at Wooroloo was based on each unit accommodating no more than 50 prisoners. One of these units now accommodates 100 prisoners. With numbers this high, it is increasingly difficult for prison officers to develop any familiarity with the prisoner group and identify potential risks or issues before they become more serious.
- 2.25 As mentioned above, Wooroloo received an additional 20 prisoners with very little notice during the week of the inspection. These prisoners were accommodated in double-bunked rooms that Wooroloo had been able to avoid using up until that point. Reports of tension between prisoners were almost immediate. In a minimum security environment that is supposedly an earned privilege, prisoners are particularly resentful of being forced to share a room.
- 2.26 This Office is extremely concerned that double-bunking is becoming the accepted standard for prisoner accommodation in Western Australia. The standard accommodation capacities presented to this Office by the Department have begun, on occasion, to incorporate doubled-up cells as the standard capacity. This appears to be the case with the new accommodation area being planned for Wooroloo. This is not acceptable and normalisation of double-bunking within the Department must not be allowed. Double-bunking presents a serious risk to safety, decency and management regimes.

*Recommendation 2*

*The multiple occupancy of prisoners in cells not designed for that purpose should not be an accepted accommodation model for prisons in Western Australia. Where this is temporarily unavoidable, compensatory processes should be implemented to mitigate risk and disadvantage.*

**PERCEIVED SHIFT IN PRISONER PROFILE**

- 2.27 At the various staff meetings held during the inspection (including uniformed, non-uniformed and senior staff) there was a very strong perception that the prisoner profile at Wooroloo had shifted. There was a suspicion that the classification system had changed (or manipulated) to ensure that more prisoners could be accommodated at Wooroloo. Some staff assumed that a 'worse' category of minimum security prisoner was being sent

to Wooroloo because of the added security of the fence. Associated with this was the belief that some prisoners were being transferred to minimum security much too quickly, without having spent enough time at other prisons to get used to the system and understand the privilege of being in a minimum security prison.

- 2.28 Staff believed that the prisoners housed at Wooroloo recently were less respectful and less manageable than minimum security prisoners in the past. Many staff attributed poor behaviours to younger prisoners, noting a generational change in their attitude. Many also blamed prisoner's increased use of illicit drugs, and in particular amphetamines.
- 2.29 The inspection found nothing to support the suggestion that classifications had been changed or manipulated to increase the pool of prisoners that could be transferred to Wooroloo. There were, however, examples of prisoners who had progressed to minimum security status very soon after entering the prison system. This is to be expected given the immense population pressures facing the prison system throughout the state. For Wooroloo, it means there is a chance that prisoners will arrive at the prison in an unsettled state, and this is another challenge for staff.
- 2.30 More generally, the profile of the prisoner population is changing system-wide, with more violent offenders and drug-related offenders entering prisons. This has no doubt been reflected at Wooroloo, but the exact extent of the change is unclear. In any event, the perception of most staff at Wooroloo is that there has been a distinct shift. This has evidently led to changes in the way in which prison officers interact with and manage prisoners, and contributed to the obvious decline in the prison's performance in this area.

#### DIRECTION AND LEADERSHIP

- 2.31 The strong performance of the prison at the 2006 inspection was closely linked to the recognition of Wooroloo as a re-entry prison. Both local management and head office had a clear understanding of Wooroloo's role in the wider prison system. Prison staff and management were united in pursuit of their objectives, and there was a clear expectation and communication of the standard of performance and attitude required of staff.
- 2.32 Unfortunately, the 2009 inspection found a very different prison. Wooroloo seemed to have lost focus on its key purpose of preparing prisoners for release. The role of Wooroloo is not clearly defined in its most recent Annual Business Plan,<sup>5</sup> with the section earmarked for this purpose referring readers to other documents that are not available with the plan.<sup>6</sup> It does state, however, that it is 'the only metropolitan-based minimum-security pre-release centre in Western Australia' and that the prison 'focuses on encouraging prisoners to be appropriately prepared for their return to the community as responsible citizens'.<sup>7</sup> Other than these two references there is no clear message within the plan that re-entry and case managing prisoners to their release is the main objective of the prison. This lack of direction was reflected throughout the prison during the inspection.

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5 Department of Corrective Services, *Wooroloo Prison Farm Annual Business Plan 2008-09*.

6 Ibid, 3.

7 Ibid, 3.

- 2.33 The inspection team also heard that recognition of Wooroloo as a re-entry prison was far from unequivocal at head office level. In the current environment of severe overcrowding within the prison system, there is a serious risk that the goal of preparing prisoners for release will be superseded by the more immediate demands of finding beds for the ever-increasing prisoner population. Without doubt, the decision to increase Wooroloo's capacity to 360 was driven by population pressures and limited consideration was given to the potential damage to the prison's re-entry objectives.
- 2.34 The diminishing clarity of Wooroloo's role within the prison system had been further exacerbated by the lack of sure and stable leadership in the three years since the previous inspection. The substantive Superintendent was absent from the prison for that entire period on secondment. This resulted in a shuffling of positions within the Wooroloo management team, and caused particular disruption in the Business Manager role which changed hands five times in four years. This chronic instability within the senior management team undermined the prison's ability to articulate its own goals. Staff received less direction and there was no clear communication of what the expectations were for officers in a minimum security environment.
- 2.35 The senior officer group had also been depleted during this period with substantive appointments occurring in December 2008, not long before the inspection. For a considerable period there had only been three substantive senior officers at the prison, with the remaining ten positions filled on an acting basis. This resulted in a perceived lack of consistency, support and leadership among staff. There were also ongoing and unresolved personal issues between certain staff members that were contributing to the negative feelings of some staff. With the substantive appointment of all senior officer positions and the return of the Superintendent, these issues must be decisively addressed to enable the prison to move forward.
- 2.36 Given these issues, it was not surprising to find a severely deteriorated relationship between staff of all types and levels with the prison. Only 39 per cent of staff survey respondents stated that they were satisfied with their relations with line management.<sup>8</sup> This was down substantially from the 2006 survey in which the satisfaction rate was 93 per cent (at that time one of the highest of all prisons in Western Australia). Every single respondent to the survey noted that one of the most negative aspects of working at Wooroloo was their relationship with senior staff.

#### COMMUNICATION BETWEEN STAFF

- 2.37 One of the key sources of frustration highlighted to the inspection team by a wide range of staff was the absence of a coherent communication strategy at the prison. At this time of significant change for Wooroloo, there is a need for consultation on the many challenges being faced by the prison, with opportunities for staff to make suggestions or to raise problems they are experiencing. Unfortunately, there were very few examples of this taking place. In general, there were rarely any meetings involving all staff, and some staffing groups

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<sup>8</sup> It should be noted that the surveys were conducted in February 2009, when the substantive Superintendent had only just returned to the prison.

thought that they were not represented at management meetings. At the unit level, prison officers felt unit meetings were tokenistic and a method of handing out orders rather than a genuine information-sharing and interactive experience.

- 2.38 Vocational Support Officers (VSOs) were particularly marginalised. They did not feel well-informed about individual issues that could affect a particular prisoner's performance or attitude at work, and were concerned that this could potentially impact on the safety of others in the workshops. With the Business Manager position changing so frequently, they complained that there was no information about the direction of industries, no feedback about their performance and a lack of representation at management decision-making forums.
- 2.39 With the challenges that Wooroloo faces in the near future, it is essential that regular and genuine methods of information-sharing and consultation are established. This must encompass all areas of the prison including prison officers, VSOs, education, health, administration and support services. A wide-ranging strategy must be established as a matter of urgency.

*Recommendation 3*

*The prison should establish a communication strategy to ensure regular, accurate and comprehensive communication of information both up and down the reporting lines for staff.*

**STAFFING ISSUES**

- 2.40 All of the issues discussed so far have had a negative impact on staff at Wooroloo, resulting in a workforce that is low in morale and disillusioned with many aspects of their work. In addition to this, the prison has faced severe staff shortages and associated concerns from staff about personal safety.

**Staff shortages**

- 2.41 At the time of the inspection, Wooroloo had 66 approved uniformed full-time equivalent (FTE) positions and 63 were currently occupied. The prison had also been promised another 4.5 FTE positions in response to the extra 20 prisoners that the prison received during that week. This meant that Wooroloo was three uniformed FTE short, and would be 7.5 short when the new agreed FTE arrangements came into operation. However, five new recruits from the next graduating class at the training academy were rostered to Wooroloo, which would leave them only 2.5 FTE short. This could be comfortably covered by staff working overtime shifts.
- 2.42 However, in the preceding two years, Wooroloo had suffered from severe and prolonged staff shortages. At times, the prison was up to 19 FTE short which equates to 28 per cent of the workforce. Overtime was used extensively in an attempt to cover shifts, but the prison was frequently forced to operate with lower than approved staffing levels. On one notable occasion, the prison ran with only eight uniformed staff rather than the approved 16. Many staff spoke of feeling exhausted by the amount of overtime required and the pre-inspection



staff survey identified the heavy workload as one of the most negative aspects of working at Wooroloo.

- 2.43 The sheer number of vacancies on the roster forced the prison to regularly rely on staff from other prisons to cover shifts. These officers typically came from higher security prisons and naturally brought with them a greater focus on security matters. Wooroloo staff, themselves burnt out by the demands of excessive overtime, grew more and more disengaged from the prisoner group and interaction fell away. The damage this caused to the prison's culture is clearly evident from the negative findings in this report.
- 2.44 With staffing now at a healthy level again, this Office hopes that the prison can recover its good performance of the past. For now, the custodial staffing group remains in a fragile state. Concerns about staff mix, personal safety and bullying (discussed below) continue to influence morale.
- 2.45 Non-uniformed staff felt similarly over-worked as a result of managing increased prisoner numbers without requisite increases in resources. Custodial staffing levels are considered without fail when a prison's capacity increases, but it is often the other service areas of the prison that are overlooked. For example, the increased numbers at Wooroloo had added to the workload of the cashier and created more demand for the visit booking service, but neither had been recognised with additional resources. This trend was echoed throughout the administration and support services of the prison. It is imperative that all areas are adequately resourced as the prison moves towards and beyond the upcoming capacity increase.

#### Staff mix

- 2.46 As mentioned above, there was a strong perception amongst prison officers that the staff mix at Wooroloo is not appropriate. The concerns related specifically to the numbers of female officers and probationary officers.
- 2.47 It was suggested that a higher proportion of female staff led to a heavier workload for male officers because the main burden of tasks such as urine testing and strip searching necessarily fell on the male officers. Staff also linked their concerns about personal safety directly to the issue of gender mix. This will be discussed further below, with particular reference to staffing during the night shift.
- 2.48 In reality, the number of female officers at Wooroloo is not especially high. Female staff make up approximately 31 per cent of the prison officer group and this Office considers that to be entirely appropriate.
- 2.49 Additional concerns about staff mix related to the high number of probationary staff that the prison has received over the past 18 months. While staff are grateful and relieved to have additional resources, the influx of so many new officers in such a short timeframe means that some shifts can have a high proportion of relatively inexperienced staff. This places added pressure on the more experienced staff and again has contributed to staff anxieties about personal safety.

- 2.50 An issue for management, especially in light of the concerns about lack of leadership and loss of direction, is the number of new staff at Wooroloo who have transferred in from more secure facilities. Without strong leadership that provides a clear expectation to these staff about the way they should operate in the minimum security re-entry environment, the default position for many staff is the more security-orientated practices they are used to from their previous experiences. This is yet another factor that has had a negative impact on officer and prisoner relationships.
- 2.51 The issues raised during the inspection in relation to the mix of staff at Wooroloo are ones that have faced many prisons over the past three years with low staff numbers and increasing prisoner populations. With strong leadership and direction regarding the expectations of staff, many of these issues can be addressed and improve the operation and morale of Wooroloo.

#### Safety

- 2.52 Prison officers and VSOs expressed concern about their personal safety, and feared there was potential for a serious incident to take place. The stated causes of their anxiety included:
- inadequate staffing levels making them more vulnerable to the continuously growing prisoner population;
  - a 'worse' category of prisoner entering the system;
  - the high proportion of female officers in the prison; and
  - the high proportion of inexperienced officers in the prison.
- 2.53 With the increasing prisoner population, the number of incidents and resulting prison charges over the past 12 months had increased significantly. Between January and April 2009, there were 123 prison charges laid at Wooroloo. For the same period in 2008, only 51 charges were laid.<sup>9</sup> Although the prison population had increased during that time, the rise in prison charges was grossly disproportionate to the rise in prisoner numbers. There had also been recent reports of inappropriate behaviour by prisoners towards female officers. This had heightened the security and safety concerns of prison officers, particularly in relation to the night shift.
- 2.54 As discussed earlier, Wooroloo does not actually have an especially high number of female officers (around 31 per cent). It was evident, however, that the real concerns for female staff stemmed from rostering practices. The inspection team heard that there had been occasions when the majority of night shift staff were female, and it was not uncommon for a particular unit to be staffed only by female officers at night. The risk this poses at Wooroloo is elevated because prisoners are not locked in their cells at night. In fact, it is not possible for prisoners to be locked in their cells at all, and this was another source of unease for officers.
- 2.55 As a general rule, the Western Australian Prison Officers' Union does not support selective rostering in prisons, but there should be room for negotiation in situations where prison officers themselves are feeling unsafe. Wooroloo could easily and effectively address staff

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<sup>9</sup> Data sourced from Total Offender Management System (TOMS).

concerns about safety by arranging the roster to ensure a suitable gender mix for every night shift. This would apply equally to ensuring a reasonable mix of experienced and inexperienced staff for any given shift. Any such moves would be highly dependent on cooperation from the union.

- 2.56 A related but separate issue was the level of VSO staffing in the various work areas of the prison. The union-approved ratio of VSOs to prisoners in any workshop is 1:15, but some VSOs at Wooroloo were routinely required to take responsibility for many more prisoners. The problem was present in the mechanical workshop and cabinet shop, but was most pronounced in the kitchen and the laundry, both of which employed 30 to 40 prisoners supervised by only one VSO. Not only is this a safety risk for both staff and prisoners, but it also hinders any attempt to deliver certified training to prisoners. Many VSOs reported that they were simply too busy to provide the level of supervision and assessment necessary for a certification.
- 2.57 Wooroloo is rightly proud of maintaining close to 100 per cent prisoner employment, but as the prisoner population continues to rise this will no longer be sustainable without significant investment in industries' infrastructure and staffing. Indeed, this is true of every operational area in the prison. The current fragile state of the prison makes it absolutely essential that staffing and resourcing requirements in all areas are determined and implemented well in advance of the proposed capacity increase.

*Recommendation 4*

*The Department should ensure that all operational areas at Wooroloo Prison Farm are adequately resourced in anticipation of the proposed capacity increase.*

**Training**

- 2.58 Staff training at Wooroloo has been far from adequate in the past three years. This is hardly surprising given the acute staff shortages the prison has faced, which have left little time or opportunity to prioritise training. On top of this, the prison had been without a training officer until a substantive Senior Officer Training was finally appointed in October 2008. Following his appointment, the Senior Officer Training began trying to identify training deficits, but unfortunately it was determined that the deficits were so great that it would be necessary to start from scratch. Training had not been a priority at the prison for such a long time that even mandatory requirements such as first aid and workplace safety had not been delivered.
- 2.59 At the time of the inspection, the situation had improved to the point where most staff had requalified for their compulsory units, such as first aid. There are, however, entrenched deficiencies in the systems and processes in place for the provision of training at Wooroloo. Central to this is the prison's inability to lock prisoners in their cells, which in turn means that staff cannot be freed from duties in order to attend training. However, the prison already operates a restricted movement regime during visits sessions so it should be possible to make similar arrangements to facilitate staff training.

- 2.60 The prison's strong focus on prisoner employment also means that workshops are very rarely closed, which limits opportunities for industrial staff to attend training. The training officer advised that it is generally very difficult to engage VSOs in training, and for the busiest of them (such as the kitchen VSO) it is virtually impossible.
- 2.61 The result is that the training officer spends his time delivering the same training module over and over again to small groups of officers, sometimes as few as two per session. There have also been occasions when overtime has been used to bring staff in to the prison specifically for training.
- 2.62 This method of training is a poor use of resources. It does not encourage staff participation and does not send the message that training is an important part of staff development. It also severely limits the breadth of training that can be delivered as it takes long periods of time for the training officer to deliver the same amount of training that could be achieved in two weeks of group training at other facilities.
- 2.63 There is a dire need to identify better options for training delivery, but the training officer has essentially been acting alone in trying to achieve the training goals for the prison. Prison management must become more engaged with and supportive of the training needs of staff, both uniformed and non-uniformed. Active planning of how regular training can be facilitated must be progressed with the cooperation of management. Management must also actively address a perceived attitude that staff can opt out of training. It must be made clear that training is a priority at this prison.

#### SUMMARY

- 2.64 All of the issues discussed in this chapter have combined to seriously damage staff morale and impair the performance of the prison. In its current state the prison is not ready to absorb an additional 90 prisoners within 12 months as proposed. Nevertheless, this Office is confident that Wooroloo is capable of improving its performance and regaining its rightful place as one of the better prisons in the state. The Superintendent and the senior management team at the prison are committed to this goal, and they have the experience and the expertise to guide the prison towards it. However, the capacity of the senior management team is already stretched, and the impending capacity increase is an additional stressor. If the prison is to restore its previous level of performance while at the same time preparing for a significant increase in prisoner numbers, local management will need strong support from the Department. At the time of the inspection, it was anticipated that all forward planning for the proposed capacity increase would be carried out by the existing senior management team at Wooroloo, and the Department had no plans to provide additional resources or assistance. Given the challenges that prison management face in dealing with some of the identified issues, it is essential that there are adequate staff in the senior management team to resolve existing issues and to prepare the prison for the proposed capacity increase.

## DECLINE IN PERFORMANCE: SYMPTOMS AND CAUSES

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### *Recommendation 5*

*The Department should provide additional staffing on the senior management team at Wooroloo Prison Farm until such time as the prison returns to its previous high level of performance and is prepared for the proposed capacity increase.*

# Chapter 3

## PREPARING PRISONERS FOR RELEASE

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- 3.1 All services at Wooroloo should in some way contribute to preparing prisoners for release. As a general principle, the function of preparing prisoners for release and providing re-entry services is best delivered in a positive and pro-social environment where prisoners feel supported and confident of having their needs addressed. As discussed in chapter two, however, the positive atmosphere of Wooroloo had deteriorated drastically and communication between officers and prisoners was poor. This fact had inevitably reduced the prisoner group's receptiveness to and trust in the re-entry services offered, and impacted on uptake and effectiveness of delivery. To their credit, staff in the areas outlined below remained committed to their work, and continued to do the best possible job under difficult circumstances.
- 3.2 On the whole, and despite the aforementioned loss of direction, the prison was still making efforts to prepare prisoners for release and improve delivery of re-entry services. A material example of this was the recent relocation of a number of related services into a single dedicated building now known as 'Re-entry House'. This was achieved by converting the old medical centre into office space, which now houses the Transitional Manager, Employment Coordinator, Community Corrections Officer, Case Management Coordinator and Assessments team, and the Prisoner Support Officer. The worthy intention was to facilitate ease of access for prisoners by making all re-entry services available in the same part of the prison. It has had the additional benefit of strengthening the level of cooperation and coordination between these services, and the team at Re-entry House presents as entirely united and committed to their common objective of preparing prisoners for release.
- 3.3 Less positively, the physical separation of these services from the main administration building has left some staff feeling more isolated from management and alienated from the decision-making process. This is closely linked to the previously discussed shortfalls in communication across the site, and absolutely must be addressed to ensure that this critical cluster of services remains centrally involved in the prison's forward planning.

### CASE MANAGEMENT

- 3.4 The concept of case management is not particularly well-defined within the Department. This Office believes that case management should involve regular and meaningful contact between a prisoner and their designated case manager. Particularly in a re-entry prison, the case manager should be a source of information and assistance for the prisoner and play a significant role in preparing the prisoner for release. While the Department would no doubt support these principles, the reality is that case management in Western Australian prisons rarely involves any more than tracking a prisoner's progress against the requirements of their Individual Management Plan. Prisoners typically have little or no meaningful contact with their case manager, and are sometimes even unaware of who their case manager is.
- 3.5 At Wooroloo, prisoners at least had an understanding of the case management process and could generally identify their case manager. However, the quality of contact was highly variable. There are still prison officers within the prison who are resistant to the concept of case management, and do not feel it is part of their job. On the other hand, there are

officers who have embraced case management, and some (but not many) prisoners had good relationships with their case managers and had high praise for the help they had provided. This illustrates the great potential of case management if it is done properly.

- 3.6 It is difficult for the Case Management Coordinator and local management to drive and develop case management at Wooroloo when there is no support or investment from head office. This is best exemplified by the fact that there is no Departmental policy document relating to case management. Similarly, while case management is supposedly explained during the training of new officers at the academy, there is no module on case management in the training program. There is a definite sense that people are working hard to promote case management at the local level but suffering from a lack of direction and commitment at head office level.
- 3.7 The Case Management Coordinator and the Assessments team were generally meeting their deadlines in relation to prisoners' Individual Management Plans, but capacity was severely stretched. The rising prisoner population had increased demand for assessments and reports, as had new initiatives such as the Prisoner Employment Program. Despite this, the Assessments team had not received any additional resources. With the proposed capacity increase, extra resources in this area will be absolutely essential.

#### REHABILITATIVE PROGRAMS

- 3.8 Although the level of program delivery at Wooroloo was far better than 12 months earlier, it was still not meeting the demands of the prisoner population. Many prisoners were required to complete certain programs to comply with their Individual Management Plan, but had been unable to take part because of limited spaces. They were understandably frustrated and concerned at the impact on their chances of being granted parole. Particular anger was expressed by prisoners who had been transferred to Wooroloo specifically to participate in a particular program, then told that there was no room for them in the program group.
- 3.9 In the nine months leading up to the inspection, Wooroloo had offered one program addressing substance abuse (Moving On From Dependency); one program addressing violent offending (Medium Intensity Violence Program); two cognitive skills programs for non-Aboriginal prisoners (Think First); and two cognitive skills programs for Aboriginal prisoners (Think First Indigenous). In total, 60 prisoners took part in these programs, which is less than a quarter of the population.
- 3.10 Positively, the schedule for 2009 featured a greater number of programs, including four Moving On From Dependency programs; four Medium Intensity Violence programs; three Think First programs; and three Think First Indigenous programs. However, this means nothing unless the programs are actually delivered; and the prison was already complaining of delays.
- 3.11 One of the problems for Wooroloo is that there is nobody on site with official responsibility for coordination of the program schedule. The Case Management Coordinator had taken on this task, although it is not part of her role. In general, Wooroloo management are not well-informed about the programs running in the prison, and poor communication from

## PHOTOGRAPHS

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*Construction of a perimeter fence and gatehouse was completed in 2007. This clearly represented a significant change to the physical environment of the prison, but there was also a widely-held perception that the fence had been detrimental to the traditionally positive and relaxed atmosphere of the prison [2.13]–[2.17].*



*There are a number of unused buildings within the secure perimeter of Wooroloo Prison Farm. The Department of Corrective Services plans to renovate and refurbish several of these buildings in order to increase the capacity of the prison to 360 prisoners [2.18]–[2.26].*



## PHOTOGRAPHS

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*The grassed outdoor visits area is a pleasant environment with benches, tables and chairs for visitors, and play equipment available for children. However, there was a lack of shelter from the elements, meaning this area was less likely to be used in the heat of summer or in rainy weather [3.45]–[3.52].*



*The basketball court with tennis court and oval visible in the background. Recreation was one of the most positive aspects of the prison, with the opportunity for prisoners to leave the prison and take part in community sporting competitions a particular highlight [4.25]–[4.28].*

the programs branch at head office makes it difficult to even get fundamental information such as scheduled starting dates.

- 3.12 It is essential that local management are aware of program activity in their own prison because there are arrangements that must be made to allow programs to run. Staff at head office may not be aware of local issues impacting upon delivery. For example, the programs branch had in the past scheduled more programs to run at one time than the prison had rooms available. Such problems can be easily avoided by more effective communication from head office.
- 3.13 Local management's poor knowledge of program activity is exacerbated by the fact that all programs are delivered by contractors (except the cognitive skills courses which are delivered by prison officers). While the contracted staff are well-qualified and experienced facilitators, there were concerns that prison management have no relationship with them and do not get an opportunity to understand what they are doing in the prison. This also means that the staff themselves feel isolated within the prison, attending only to deliver their courses and leaving without any real interaction with other prison staff. There is a need for regular meetings between management and contracted programs staff so that management are informed of the progress of the programs running in the prison, and programs staff are made aware of any issues that may affect the prison in general or the specific prisoners participating in programs.
- 3.14 Another concern for the inspection team was the development of the Think First Indigenous program. The program is facilitated by an Aboriginal prison officer who has modified some of the vocabulary and concepts in the standard Think First program so that it is more appropriate for Aboriginal participants. In all other respects, the Indigenous program is fundamentally the same as the non-Indigenous program. In reality, it is a cognitive skills program delivered by an Aboriginal prison officer which is very different from an Aboriginal cognitive skills program. Despite this, the Department was satisfied that the program was culturally appropriate, and a small number of prisoners from the Kimberley, Pilbara and Eastern Goldfields regions had in fact been transferred to Wooroloo in order to take part in it. This Office must point out the paradox inherent in removing prisoners from their traditional country in order to attend a culturally appropriate program. Furthermore, a program that has been developed for Nyoongar prisoners will not necessarily be culturally appropriate for Aboriginal prisoners from other parts of the state.
- 3.15 This is no reflection on the Aboriginal officer involved, and in fact she does an outstanding job. However, if the Department is truly committed to developing a culturally appropriate cognitive skills program for Aboriginal prisoners, the task should not be left to an individual prison officer. Furthermore, a culturally appropriate program should be properly documented in a manual like any other, and introduced in other prisons with the goal of sharing good practice.

## EDUCATION

- 3.16 Education was being delivered well at Wooroloo, and the service had in fact been considerably improved and expanded following the construction of a new education and programs centre. There were now more classrooms and offices with better facilities available. Prison management support education strongly, and the Superintendent praised the work being done in the education centre. At the 2006 inspection, it was found that '[t]he effectiveness of the centre was enhanced by the staffing arrangements: a stable team of educators being led by a senior education officer with a great deal of experience'.<sup>10</sup> This was equally true in 2009 with the senior education officer (now referred to as Campus Manager) still in the role, and all education staff presenting as committed and enthusiastic.
- 3.17 Additional staffing was provided when the new centre was opened, and this has allowed delivery of education to increase. Almost all education officers have qualifications highly relevant to the area in which they teach, and the number of staff with a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (or equivalent) is more than adequate.
- 3.18 A variety of professional development was offered to education staff, but most of this was administrative or security related. There were few sessions targeting the vocational competence of staff. For example, none of the adult literacy and numeracy teachers attended any specialist training and only one had attended a moderation meeting. None of the other staff had attended any moderation or industry specialist sessions. This is a gap that needs attention.
- 3.19 Education at Wooroloo has always competed for students with rehabilitative programs and particularly with industries because of the high rate of employment in the prison. All of these areas need a minimum group size to operate effectively. In the past, this has meant that Wooroloo education participation rates were lower than at some other prisons. It was hoped that the co-location of programs and education in the new building would improve coordination and information flow between these two areas, but this has not yet occurred. There is still a need for better processes, such as sharing of client lists and proposed timetables, to avoid clashes between education, programs and employment. Education participation rates at Wooroloo have also traditionally been affected by the fact that the majority of prisoners will be in the prison for a relatively short time before release.
- 3.20 It was difficult at first to get a clear picture of the rate of participation in education within the prison. Documentation provided to this Office before the inspection cited a figure of 36 per cent for February 2009, but records of actual attendance that month indicate a much higher rate of 58 per cent. The Campus Manager suggested that the Department's figures routinely under-report education participation because of delayed enrolments by external providers, and advised that actual monthly participation rates at Wooroloo were often over 50 per cent of the total prisoner population. This failure to capture accurate participation rates does a disservice to the Wooroloo education centre.

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10 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Wooroloo Prison Farm*, Report No. 39 (January 2007) 23.

- 3.21 There was good participation in a range of adult education programs at different levels. About 50 per cent of students were completing the adult education units they enrolled in, which is a good completion rate for these courses. Nine students were studying externally in seven different courses at five organisations. Prisoners involved in external education expressed a high level of satisfaction with the service.
- 3.22 Traineeship numbers are not high because most prisoners are simply not in the prison long enough to complete a full traineeship. Those traineeships that are offered are well targeted to areas where there is potential for prisoners to complete in the time available. The pre-apprenticeship program is a good innovation in this area because it prepares a prisoner to transfer into an apprenticeship upon release. This provides an excellent pathway from training to employment. There was a specific example of a prisoner who gained work experience while in prison and continued working with the same employer after release.
- 3.23 In the absence of traineeships, much of the vocational training takes the form of short courses, especially tickets for machinery operation. These are highly valued by prisoners as they assist in gaining employment upon release. Courses are strongly aligned to realistic labour market opportunities such as machinery operation, carpentry, building and construction, and laundry.
- 3.24 The single biggest threat to education at Wooroloo was the fact that a number of staff were on casual and fixed term contracts and they were feeling understandably insecure in the light of government demands for cost cutting. This could result in staff seeking employment elsewhere and had already been blamed for some staff contracts not being renewed. Consequently, there is a serious risk that education delivery could suffer in the second semester of 2009. It is the firm view of this Office that any reduction in funding and resourcing levels for education would be a grievous backwards step. Especially with the impending population increase, the prison will need to deliver more education, not less.

## INDUSTRIES AND EMPLOYMENT

### Employment

- 3.25 Wooroloo Prison Farm has a very strong focus on prisoner employment and consistently maintains an employment rate of over 95 per cent. Unemployment is usually restricted to those prisoners who are physically unable to work. The pre-inspection prisoner survey indicated that 84 per cent of respondents were satisfied with their access to work and prisoners interviewed during the inspection generally expressed high levels of satisfaction with their opportunities to engage in meaningful work.
- 3.26 Wooroloo offers an extensive range of meaningful work opportunities to prisoners. This includes cabinet making, gardening, catering, laundry, maintenance, metal work and mechanics, timber industries, and farm work. A considerable amount of work in the community is also undertaken by prisoners who have been approved for work release under section 95 of the *Prisons Act 1981* (WA), and also by prisoners at the Kellerberrin Work Camp. The Prisoner Employment Program is a new initiative offering further opportunities for prisoners to work outside the prison.

- 3.27 Overall, this is a successful area of the prison. It was noteworthy that prisoners were very positive about their relationships with VSOs, particularly in comparison to their relationship with prison officers. It was also impressive that the workshops rarely shut down. At other prisons it is not uncommon for workshops to be closed because the prison is short staffed and staff have been deployed elsewhere. At Wooroloo, keeping industries running is always the priority.
- 3.28 The challenge will be to maintain this level of meaningful activity and quality interaction as numbers in the prison continue to grow. The VSO group is achieving great results, but becoming increasingly disaffected. In the past three years, they have suffered from ineffective leadership and representation as a result of the high turnover in the Business Manager role. They have also accepted more and more prisoners into the workshops without receiving any extra resources. The mounting pressure is a threat to the goodwill of the VSO group and has affected their capacity to deliver outcomes such as training and certification.

#### Section 95

- 3.29 The Section 95 program at Wooroloo has doubled in size since the last inspection. Two teams of eight comprising a balance of skilled and unskilled workers are gainfully employed in regular and one-off community-based projects.
- 3.30 Notwithstanding the fact that the Section 95 program has doubled in size since April 2006, because of the increase in overall prisoner numbers, the number of prisoners involved still only represents five per cent of the total Wooroloo population (an increase in real terms of only one per cent). As a re-entry prison, it is reasonable to expect that a much higher proportion of prisoners be involved in this sort of activity. Moreover, with the proposal to further increase the prison population to 360 by 2010, untenable pressure could be placed on employment within the prison. An opportunity exists therefore to secure funding to further expand the Section 95 program as a matter of priority.

#### Prisoner Employment Program

- 3.31 The Prisoner Employment Program (PEP) and the Employment Coordinator positions were introduced to prisons across Western Australia in the second half of 2008. Their purpose is to improve prisoners' preparation for release by providing an opportunity to undertake paid employment, work experience, vocational training and education in the community in the 12 months prior to release.
- 3.32 While the program is relatively new, and it is difficult to fully evaluate its success at this stage, it is certainly true that Wooroloo has achieved some very positive early results. Since January 2009, the Employment Coordinator has secured employment for seven prisoners. Of four prisoners who have since been released, three remain in employment. Processes for securing employment for a further 13 prisoners were in progress at the time of the inspection.

- 3.33 Given its role as a re-entry prison, it is not surprising that demand for the Prisoner Employment Program at Wooroloo is high. In fact, it is by far the highest in the state. Since the commencement of the program, Wooroloo has processed 66 applications for the program, the next highest being Bunbury Regional Prison with 35 and Karnet Prison Farm with 30.
- 3.34 However, this higher level of demand has not been recognised by the Department in its allocation of resources. Wooroloo has the same level of resourcing (one full-time equivalent position) as any of the other prisons running the Prisoner Employment Program. Minimum security re-entry prisons such as Wooroloo require further resources in this area to allow as many prisoners as possible to participate and maximise the benefit of the program.

#### Gratuities system

- 3.35 The gratuities system at Wooroloo differs from that used in other prisons throughout the state. Most prisons operate on a pay levels scheme, with Level One representing the highest rate of pay and Level Six the lowest. In 2004, however, Wooroloo implemented a new gratuities system, which is still based on the usual pay levels, but also relies heavily on a system of bonus payments. As a result, Level One positions at Wooroloo were almost totally eliminated, and the majority of prisoners were placed on a base pay of Level Three. A weekly budget for bonus payments of varying (and not necessarily proportionate) amounts is allocated to each area for VSOs to distribute to prisoners under their supervision, based on work performance or output.
- 3.36 For prisoners, this was a great source of frustration. In other prisons, they were accustomed to having Level One positions in most workplaces, and were generally able to steadily work their way up the pay levels as they acquired more skill and experience. At Wooroloo, prisoners complained that they stagnated at Level Three, and it was difficult to progress to Level Two, let alone Level One. VSOs were concerned that the money for bonuses is not evenly spread between the different work areas. Consequently, there is no incentive for prisoners to work hard in one area when they could earn the same amount doing less work in another area. Because the majority of prisoners are being paid a low base rate, earning bonus payments is important to them. Problems arise when prisoners begin to treat bonus payments as an expectation, and VSOs claimed that they regularly need to pacify prisoners who are upset about not receiving a bonus.
- 3.37 For VSOs, the responsibility of distributing bonus payments adds pressure at a time when industries and employment are already under strain. For prisoners, the gratuities system is inconsistent with practice in other prisons and fuels the perception of unfairness within the Wooroloo regime. During the inspection, and having received considerable feedback about the gratuities system since his return to his substantive position, the Superintendent made an undertaking to review the gratuities system as a matter of priority.

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**TRANSITIONAL MANAGER AND RE-ENTRY SERVICES**

- 3.38 The position of Transitional Manager was introduced to Wooroloo Prison Farm in December 2008. The role of the Transitional Manager is to coordinate services to assist prisoners with issues related to their release, with the goal of making the transition from prison to freedom as smooth as possible and giving prisoners a better chance of successfully pursuing a law-abiding lifestyle. Services include assistance with procuring birth certificates, Medicare cards, Proof of Age cards and Driver's Licences; connecting prisoners with agencies such as the Child Support Agency, Department for Child Protection, Family Relationship Centre, Centrelink, and Legal Aid; and linking prisoners with transitional accommodation, employment, substance abuse counselling and life skills programs. A significant part of the Transitional Manager's role is to manage the relationship between the prison and the various external agencies and non-government organisations that deliver these services.
- 3.39 Another important function of the Transitional Manager is to promote these services among the prisoner group, and encourage prisoners to access them. From conversations with prisoners during the inspection, it was clear that the level of awareness of the range of re-entry services available was quite different from prisoner to prisoner. It was disheartening to find some prisoners with no understanding of their options and very little confidence in their own ability to survive outside the prison. On the other hand, it was clear that re-entry services were reaching a significant number of prisoners.
- 3.40 Between January 2009 and the inspection in April 2009, the Transitional Manager had processed formal requests for assistance from 161 prisoners, equating to almost 65 per cent of the total prisoner population. Many more had informally asked for advice and assistance. It was difficult to fault the Transitional Manager's efforts to advertise re-entry services: she walked around the prison interacting with prisoners on a near daily basis and was a regular presenter during the induction of new prisoners. The low awareness of re-entry services among some prisoners was no doubt attributable to the fact that the Transitional Manager had been active in the role for less than five months at the time of the inspection. This Office is confident that awareness and uptake of re-entry services will improve in the near future as a result of the good work of the Transitional Manager and indeed the whole team at Re-entry House.
- 3.41 Another reason for optimism in this area was the solid management structure for re-entry services at head office level. The team led by the Manager Re-entry presented as knowledgeable and committed, with a clear vision of the intended direction for this area of the Department of Corrective Services. While the Transitional Manager position is still developing, there is already ample evidence to suggest that it will be an extremely valuable resource for Wooroloo Prison Farm.

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## EXTERNAL AGENCIES AND NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS

- 3.42 Wooroloo Prison Farm is visited by a wide range of external agencies and non-government organisations delivering a selection of valuable services. Some of the most notable examples include Centrecare who coordinate transitional accommodation; Outcare who offer a variety of services including employment assistance, re-entry support and life skills programs; and Holyoake and Cyrenian House who both provide substance abuse programs and counselling.
- 3.43 The services these organisations provide are extremely valuable to the prison, and also to the wider Department of Corrective Services' objective of reducing re-offending. Yet non-government organisations remain a largely untapped resource within the Department. The potential for engagement with these organisations is virtually limitless, and with the rapidly increasing prisoner population stretching Departmental resources, there has never been a more opportune time to pursue an expansion in this area.
- 3.44 In the last few years, there have already been substantial advances in the Department's level of involvement with non-government organisations. The introduction of Transitional Managers in prisons is an indication of this growing relationship. The Department now has an opportunity to further develop these relationships and create more meaningful partnerships. Non-government organisations should be involved in the Department's strategic planning to facilitate improved service scope and outcomes and better align capacity with the needs of the Department. These organisations have existing resources and expertise in delivering services that directly contribute to preparing prisoners for release and reducing re-offending. There is real potential for non-government organisations to become key partners and service providers for the Department of Corrective Services.

## FAMILY AND SOCIAL CONTACT

### Visits

- 3.45 The visits regime at Wooroloo was one of the best-performing areas of the prison. The atmosphere during visits was positive and relaxed, and it was clear that facilitating family and social contact remains a priority for staff and management.
- 3.46 Since the last inspection, and in response to the increasing prisoner numbers, visits sessions have increased from once a day to twice a day on weekends and public holidays. Each session lasts two hours and prisoners are able to attend two different visit sessions per weekend. The prison has also arranged a bus for visitors from Midland on Sundays and public holidays.
- 3.47 The staff and visitor car parks are two separate areas. The staff car park has been bituminised; however the visitor car park is gravel. This is concerning in terms of equitable access for visitors as those with mobility problems may find the gravel difficult to negotiate.
- 3.48 Visitors to the prison enter through a pedestrian gate cut into the fence, rather than through the main gate. The process of managing visitors as they entered the prison ran very smoothly. Staff were friendly and engaging as visitors entered through the gate and were processed in the visitors centre. The prison was also flexible in terms of accommodating



visitors where there was confusion regarding bookings.

- 3.49 The visits centre comprised of three main areas; indoor section, patio area and a grassed outdoor area. The indoor area was bright, open and spacious. There is a kitchenette at one end of the visits building. During visits, two peer support prisoners work here providing refreshments for visitors. It was positive to see the interaction between the peer support prisoners and visitors. This set up meant that peer support prisoners would be aware of any incidents or concerns resulting from a visit and would allow them to follow up should there be any problems following the visit.
- 3.50 The large grassed outdoor visits area contains a number of benches, tables and chairs for visitors. There is also play equipment for children. However, there was limited shade from the sun in this area and it would certainly be unsuitable in wet conditions. During the inspection, the weather was fine and this area was utilised by a number of prisoners and their families. However, during poor weather the undercover area would quickly become overcrowded. With the proposed capacity increase, significant strain will be placed upon visits to cope with these additional numbers.
- 3.51 A Family Support Centre is operated by Outcare, offering services such as assistance with Centrelink, housing, financial assistance and general emotional support. Outcare also employ an Aboriginal childcare worker at the prison and it was excellent to see the interaction between the childcare worker and both the children and parents. The indoor visits area had a separate section for families with children, which contained toys and play equipment, and was decorated with streamers and murals on the wall.
- 3.52 There were appropriate security procedures associated with visits, including searching and breathalysing of prisoners at the conclusion of sessions. Recommendation 4(a) of the last report stated that ‘Wooroloo should assess the need for additional uniformed staff to supervise visits sessions’.<sup>11</sup> With the increase in prisoner numbers at the prison, there are now two additional officers per shift and these officers are now available to assist with the supervision of visits. At the same time, the security presence during visits remains discreet, as is fitting in a minimum security environment.

#### Telephone access

- 3.53 In contrast to the success of visits, access to telephones was an ongoing source of tension and stress for prisoners. Telephone calls represent an important link to family and social networks, and maintenance of this contact plays a crucial role in successfully returning to the community. For a re-entry prison like Wooroloo, the importance of telephone calls is even greater, as prisoners are likely to be making final arrangements for life following their imminent release. More than this, the opportunity to maintain contact with family is a basic human right that must be protected for all prisoners.
- 3.54 There are 12 telephones available to prisoners, but only 10 lines are available. This effectively means that no more than 10 prisoners can use the telephones at any one time.

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11 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Wooroloo Prison Farm*, Report No. 39 (January 2007) 18.

Telephones are turned off during the week from 8.00am to 11.15am and 12.30pm to 3.30pm. The stated rationale is that Wooroloo is a 'working prison' and that prisoners should not be engaged in personal business during working hours. There are, however, a significant number of prisoners (such as kitchen and bakery workers) who do not work standard hours, and are free for much of the day.

- 3.55 While there is one telephone available to prisoners at all times, this is for emergency use only and prisoners must obtain permission from unit staff before use. At the time of the inspection, there were 27 prisoners for every phone line, and the limited hours of operation meant that most were trying to make calls during the evening. As a result, prisoners faced long queues as they tried to access the telephones. To make matters worse, the reliability of the telephone system was also questionable, with frequent reports of the lines going down.
- 3.56 If telephones have been used inappropriately by prisoners who should be at work, it is not a reasonable response to deny daytime access to all prisoners. Instead, the problem should be addressed through better management of prisoners by prison officers. Use of telephones should be monitored by unit staff in any case, and any prisoner who misuses the phones can be easily identified from phone records. By making the telephone lines accessible during the day, the prison could effectively decrease the level of demand for telephones in the evening.
- 3.57 With an increasing population, difficulties around phone access are only going to become more acute. Given the importance of prisoners maintaining outside contact and relationships, particularly as they approach release, there is a need to increase the availability of telephones for all prisoners.

#### Video link

- 3.58 Video link visits are an under-utilised resource within the prison. In the 12 months prior to the inspection, this video link was used eight times, mostly to contact other prisons or detention centres. The level of understanding of the video visits system amongst prisoners and staff was quite low. There was no information regarding video visits in the orientation pack and no real promotion of this technology within the prison. The prison's solitary video visits equipment is located in a bare and uninviting room in Unit 2A. The failure to promote the use of video visits within the prison is a lost opportunity, particularly for those prisoners from regional and remote areas.

#### *Recommendation 6*

*The prison should maximise opportunities for prisoners to maintain contact with family and friends. For example, by increasing the number and availability of telephones, promoting the use of video visits, and other innovations.*

# Chapter 4

## SERVICE DELIVERY THROUGHOUT THE PRISON

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### RECEPTION AND ORIENTATION

- 4.1 The new reception centre was completed in early 2008 and it is one of the best facilities of its kind in the state. It is an open and spacious area with a non-threatening atmosphere for new prisoners. The reception process itself was relaxed yet very well-organised. The two prisoners working in reception were actively involved in the reception process. They communicated well with the new prisoners, explaining what was going to happen and moving prisoners efficiently through each of the respective processing stages. The interaction between staff and prisoners during reception was also very positive, with staff displaying an accommodating and respectful attitude towards new prisoners, and generally making the prisoners feel at ease. Food was provided to new arrivals and prisoners were allowed to smoke in the sally port area while they waited to be processed.
- 4.2 Reception staff had a good understanding of their role and processes, and this, coupled with the outstanding new facility, made reception one of the most impressive areas of the prison. However, while the prisoners employed in reception performed their duties to a high standard, it was disappointing that they were not members of the peer support team as had previously been the case. Having peer support play a role in both reception and orientation reinforces their pivotal role, and provides new prisoners with support as soon as they enter the prison.
- 4.3 The initial orientation process for new prisoners begins when they leave the reception centre under the guidance of the prisoner reception workers. They are taken to the laundry to collect their laundry packs, and given a brief tour of the prison on the way to their accommodation unit. It is likely that many prisoners will struggle to absorb the information provided during this first tour, and it is crucial that new prisoners get another opportunity to ask questions after they have had a chance to settle in. Every Tuesday and Friday a formal orientation is held for new arrivals, during which more detailed information is provided about the various services available at the prison, including education, programs, peer support and recreation.

### ACCOMMODATION

- 4.4 Because of the increased (and increasing) prisoner population at Wooroloo extensive double-bunking had become the norm for the first time. At the time of the inspection, Wooroloo was double-bunking 20 cells.
- 4.5 The prison currently has 50 semi-self-care beds and 35 self-care beds. Prison management are in the process of introducing a proper hierarchical system, whereby prisoners must go through semi-self-care before being eligible for self-care. However, there are significant waiting lists for prisoners to move into either of the privileged accommodation levels and this will become even more problematic as prisoner numbers increase.
- 4.6 Construction of self-care Unit 2A was completed in early 2008 and the design of this unit is very different from other accommodation in the prison. The unit is split into four pods, each containing six cells. The cells open onto a communal dining area and kitchen. One of these pods (six beds) is allocated to Aboriginal prisoners, in an effort by local management

to increase the chances of these prisoners reaching self-care. This allocation does not prevent Aboriginal prisoners from residing in self-care elsewhere in the prison.

- 4.7 There are significant differences in the standards of accommodation within the prison. The conditions in the self care units, particularly the newer Unit 2A, are of a significantly higher standard than the other units. The standard accommodation (including double-bunked cells) is very basic with some of the buildings and ablution blocks in need of maintenance.

#### FOOD

- 4.8 Since the last inspection there has been a significant decline in prisoners' satisfaction with the food in the prison. The 2006 inspection saw 89 per cent of prisoners satisfied with the food quality and 86 per cent satisfied with food quantity. However, the current inspection saw these numbers drop to 32 per cent and 26 per cent respectively.
- 4.9 Satisfaction with food in the prison varied significantly according to where prisoners were accommodated. Prisoners in standard accommodation receive their meals in one of the two dining halls. Food is prepared and served fresh daily on a five-week rotating menu, with fresh bread and fruit provided with lunch. Prisoners are forbidden to take any food from the dining area to consume at a later time. The reasoning behind this was in relation to food not being allowed to be kept in cells. This is confusing given that canteen food is stored in prisoner cells. Previously, supper was available for prisoners in the kitchen, but this practice ceased some time ago because of concerns relating to hygiene and the security of food being stored. Many prisoners in standard accommodation complained of hunger and felt the amount of food they received was insufficient.
- 4.10 Prisoners in semi-self-care consume their meals in the unit, with lunch and dinner provided pre-plated by trolley from the prison kitchen. These prisoners had access to a kitchenette with a fridge and pantry where food could be stored.
- 4.11 Prisoners in self-care have their own kitchen facilities and prepare their own meals. They are responsible for ordering their own food and are allocated a set number of vegetables for the week. Self-care prisoners are able to obtain more vegetables from the kitchen should they require an additional amount.

#### HEALTH SERVICES

- 4.12 The new health centre at Wooroloo was completed in early 2008 and has provided a much better facility for the prison. There was general satisfaction with the new setting in terms of lay-out, patient privacy and technical facilities, but nursing staff noted that on the busiest days the centre is still overcrowded. This was particularly evident when all the different specialists are in attendance, and is concerning given the proposed capacity increase.
- 4.13 The centre is open from 7.00am to 7.00pm during the week and there is also a nurse available on site over the weekend. The nursing staff reported that requests for appointments are usually met within 24 hours and almost always within 48 hours. Appointments are divided into those concerning primary patient care and those for clinics covering specified

## SERVICE DELIVERY THROUGHOUT THE PRISON

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chronic diseases such as blood-borne viruses and respiratory diseases. A general practitioner provides services for two full days each week and a physiotherapist visits regularly. A psychiatrist attends the prison once a month, and this would soon be increased to twice a month. The prison is also attended by a mental health nurse twice a week. Unlike many prisons, Wooroloo uses its own staff to transport prisoners to external medical appointments, and therefore avoids the problems associated with the contracted transport services.

- 4.14 At the time of the last inspection, Wooroloo prisoners could access dental health services at Acacia Prison, but now they must travel considerably further to Casuarina Prison to see a dentist. In the planning of the new health centre, it was intended that dental services would be provided at Wooroloo but the dental room was not fitted out with the necessary equipment at the time of construction, and since then the prison has been unable to find a willing and capable contractor to undertake the work.
- 4.15 Nursing staff were concerned at staffing level cuts, and doubted their ongoing capacity to adequately cover staff absences. Essentially, the centre is running with a bare minimum of nursing staff. Paradoxically, records indicate that demand for services has risen with completed appointments increasing by 47 per cent in the 12 months prior to the inspection. The low staffing level has meant that, while basic requirements such as annual health check-ups for all prisoners are being delivered, there is less evidence of ongoing health education initiatives.
- 4.16 In summary, the standard of medical services at Wooroloo remains good. Prisoners interviewed were generally happy with medical services at Wooroloo, although some concerns persisted around the provision of dental services. Despite the current good performance, increasing prisoner numbers and disquiet amongst nursing staff may well have a negative impact on the future provision of medical services.

### PEER SUPPORT

- 4.17 An effective prisoner peer support team is a key element in any prison, and the benefits go far beyond simply providing support and assistance to prisoners. Peer support members are able to assist staff by identifying problems before they escalate and are an important communication link between prisoners and staff. Members of the peer support team tend to be more articulate and confident in putting forward issues, and therefore play a vital role in representing those prisoners not confident enough to represent themselves. The success of the peer support team is highly dependent on the coordination and guidance of the Prisoner Support Officer.
- 4.18 In the past, Wooroloo has operated without a Prisoner Support Officer for long periods and this has inevitably weakened the peer support system in the prison. At the time of the inspection, the substantive Prisoner Support Officer was on secondment to head office, with the current Peer Support Officer having been acting in the role since mid-January 2009. Despite the disruptions, the peer support team was running relatively well, and there were indications that its effectiveness within the prison was improving.

- 4.19 There are 12 prisoners in the peer support team at the prison and one at the Kellerberrin Work Camp. The prison-based members meet every fortnight to discuss issues raised by their fellow prisoners, which can then be brought to the attention of management by the Prisoner Support Officer. The Prisoner Support Officer had evidently developed a strong rapport with the peer support prisoners, and clearly communicated the high standard of behaviour expected of them.
- 4.20 The Prisoner Support Officer had also taken the unconventional step of creating his own work party to undertake special projects aimed at improving the prison environment. Works have included construction of retaining walls and garden beds, and laying of paved walkways. Management were supportive of the activity, but it had caused some tension with VSOs who perceived the new special projects team as a competitor for resources, equipment and jobs. Management need to carefully define which jobs are appropriate for the special projects team to undertake and communicate this with the VSO group and ensure the availability of sufficient resources and equipment.
- 4.21 In principle, the special projects team is a positive move in terms of keeping prisoners occupied, particularly as the prisoner population increases and it becomes more and more difficult to find employment for the rising numbers. However, while the team has achieved some great results, it is not at this stage linked to any sort of vocational training or certification, and should not therefore take the place of more meaningful employment. In addition, given that it is not traditionally part of the role, this Office supports this initiative only to the extent that it does not infringe upon the other responsibilities of the Prisoner Support Officer.
- 4.22 The absence of peer support team involvement in the reception process was an identified gap. At the 2006 inspection, the prisoner workers in the reception centre were required to be members of the peer support team, and this was one of the better features of the process. It is suggested that the prison reinstitute this practice. This is important in highlighting to new prisoners that peer support play a central role in the prison, and gives the peer support team awareness of any new prisoners who may require additional support or assistance.
- 4.23 An emerging issue for the peer support team and Prisoner Support Officer was the presence in the prison of a small number of out-of-country Aboriginal prisoners. In the past, it was rare for Wooroloo to hold any Aboriginal prisoners who were not from Perth or the South-West region. It now seems likely that the accommodation of out-of-country Aboriginal prisoners will be more common, and this raises specific management issues. To this end, the Prisoner Support Officer should take an active role in encouraging the use of video visits with a specific focus on these out-of-country Aboriginal men. It may also be valuable for a particular member or members of the peer support team to be tasked with paying special attention to the wellbeing of the out-of-country Aboriginal prisoners.
- 4.24 At the 2006 inspection, there were concerns that the flow of information between the Prisoner Support Officer and Wooroloo management was poor, and that management

had limited ability to direct the Prisoner Support Officer.<sup>12</sup> In 2009, this relationship had improved significantly, with the Prisoner Support Officer now reporting to the Assistant Superintendent, allowing Wooroloo management to determine how the service will function locally. At the time of the inspection, however, there was still a need for more regular meetings between management and the Prisoner Support Officer, and ideally even the peer support team. Positively, between the conclusion of the on-site inspection and the writing of this Report, the Superintendent began meeting regularly with the peer support team. It is good practice for the peer support team to have direct access to the Superintendent, rather than always having to relay their views through the Prisoner Support Officer as intermediary.

#### RECREATION

- 4.25 Recreation was undoubtedly one of the highlights of the prison. Results from the pre-inspection prisoner survey identified sport and recreation as the most positive aspect of life at Wooroloo.
- 4.26 Since the 2006 inspection, the prison has built a new gymnasium, which is large and well equipped. Even so, this facility becomes very crowded in the evening when the majority of prisoners want to access it. Works associated with the proposed capacity increase will clearly need to include a further expansion of the gymnasium.
- 4.27 Wooroloo offers a number of sporting activities and competitions such as football, soccer, basketball, softball and tennis. The clear standout of the recreation program, however, was the opportunity for prisoners to leave the prison grounds to play sport. Depending on the season, prisoners are involved in various community sporting competitions. At the time of the inspection, the prison had its own football team entered in a local league. This was viewed as a particular highlight and privilege by those participating. Family and friends were permitted to attend the games, and prisoners could spend time with their family before and after the actual sporting event. In short, the games are a positive experience for all, appreciated by prisoners and families alike. There can be few better ways to help a prisoner reintegrate into the community.
- 4.28 More passive recreational options were available in the units in the form of dart boards, pool tables, board games and card games. Quiz nights and video nights also take place on the weekend and there is a library of books, magazines and videos available to prisoners.

#### SERVICES FOR ABORIGINAL PRISONERS

- 4.29 During the inspection there were 61 Aboriginal prisoners at Wooroloo, representing around 23 per cent of the total population. As such, Aboriginal prisoners made up a significant sub-population with a unique set of needs and cultural demands. There had also recently been an increase in the number of Aboriginal prisoners from regional and remote areas placed in the prison.

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12 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Wooroloo Prison Farm*, Report No. 39 (January 2007) 18. Recommendation 5: 'A review should be undertaken of reporting arrangements for the position of Prisoner Support Officer to clarify the ability of the Superintendent to direct and be accountable for the delivery of the service on site at Wooroloo'.

- 4.30 There was no evidence that Aboriginal prisoners were experiencing disadvantage, and indeed they were proportionately represented in all areas of the prison. Aboriginal prisoners were engaged in meaningful employment and skill development, including participation in education, recreation, and rehabilitative programs. There was Aboriginal representation on the peer support team and Aboriginal prisoners were housed in all levels of accommodation, including self-care.
- 4.31 With the fairly recent arrival of several out-of-country prisoners, the prison was perhaps not providing enough assistance with family contact. The importance of out-of-country Aboriginal prisoners maintaining links with their community cannot be understated. These prisoners faced the same difficulties as any others with accessing the limited number of telephones, but were also typically trying to contact communities where home phone lines are not the norm, and mobile coverage is erratic at best. Out-of-country prisoners are entitled to an additional telephone allowance in recognition of these issues, but there was no system in place to ensure that they were receiving it. Video link visits can also be a good way to contact family for out-of-country prisoners, but as discussed above this is a largely wasted resource at Wooroloo.
- 4.32 Wooroloo had made an abortive attempt to establish an Indigenous Services Committee in November 2007, but after the first meeting it lost momentum and no further meetings were held. The increase in out-of-country prisoners housed at the prison elevates the need for this committee to be re-established in order to determine the needs of this sub-population and monitor if these needs are being met.

#### Aboriginal Visitors Scheme

- 4.33 The idea of the Aboriginal Visitors Scheme (AVS) is to provide support by talking to Aboriginal prisoners, monitoring their wellbeing and reporting their issues and concerns. Unfortunately, the AVS was underperforming at Wooroloo.
- 4.34 Two staff members from the AVS visit the prison on Mondays and Thursdays from 8.30am to 9.30am. Even without further analysis, it should be obvious that one hour is grossly insufficient to provide an adequate service. Wooroloo as a site is large, and one hour is simply not enough to visit all areas of the prison. This means that the visitors will usually only see prisoners who have specifically requested an audience. Any such requests must be made through unit staff, but an upset or vulnerable prisoner may be reluctant to do this, particularly given the poor state of the relationship between officers and prisoners. It was especially disappointing that the AVS had no links with the Prisoner Support Officer and peer support team in the prison, and so no exchange of information about issues of concern was occurring.
- 4.35 The most successful relationships with the AVS in other prisons have involved incorporating the visitors into aspects of the daily prison regime, and getting them involved in cultural activities such as the cooking of traditional Aboriginal food.<sup>13</sup> At Wooroloo, however,

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13 For example see OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Albany Regional Prison*, Report No. 60 (April 2009) 7-8.



the AVS are not well-integrated with other aspects of the prison. The allotted two hours per week is plainly not enough for the visitors to carry out their role. In comparison, the 19 hours per week that these same visitors spend at nearby Acacia Prison seems disproportionate, despite Acacia's higher prisoner population.

#### Traditional food

- 4.36 The prison makes kangaroo meat and damper available every Friday, meaning Aboriginal prisoners have a regular opportunity to cook traditional foods. However, there is no coordination of this activity and it is dependent on prisoners volunteering to organise and take responsibility for cooking. This volunteer does not receive any additional gratuities or bonus and if there is no volunteer, then this 'cook up' does not take place. The kangaroo and damper is prepared in the kitchen and served in the Aboriginal meeting place. A more structured approach, perhaps with peer support involved, would see this activity as a celebration of Aboriginal culture rather than a burden or additional task for the prison.

# Chapter 5

## KELLERBERRIN WORK CAMP

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### THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STAFF AND PRISONERS

- 5.1 The relationship between prison officers and prisoners at the Kellerberrin Work Camp is necessarily very different to that at Wooroloo Prison Farm. The work camp operates with one officer supervising up to 12 prisoners, and prisoners generally have more freedom than they would in a prison. Prisoners must satisfy strict criteria before being authorised to transfer to the work camp, and are conscious that any lapse in behaviour will likely see this privilege revoked. The work camp officers, for their part, were aware that the success of the camp is highly dependent on positive and effective relationships with the prisoners.
- 5.2 In stark contrast to the situation found at Wooroloo Prison Farm, work camp prisoners spoke very positively of their relationship with the officers. It was telling that, despite the comparatively impoverished facilities of the work camp, all of the prisoners living there stated that their absolute preference was to remain at Kellerberrin and not return to Wooroloo. They spoke of the negative atmosphere at Wooroloo in the strongest terms.
- 5.3 Similarly, the officers at the work camp (both during the inspection and earlier visits) were happy and enjoyed their job. They were committed to, and even passionate about the concept and philosophy of work camps. They could see the benefits for prisoners in terms of rehabilitation and resocialisation, and felt that living at the work camp was an excellent way for prisoners to prepare for their release. This Office agrees entirely with these sentiments, although the work camp does suffer from a number of shortcomings in facilities and access to services.

### ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES

- 5.4 The work camp buildings were formerly a school, and the old classrooms have been converted into accommodation units. The buildings are structurally sound, but in need of maintenance, with roof leaks and ceiling damage evident. A section of ceiling had recently collapsed, illustrating that the neglected premises pose a real safety risk. The biggest concern for prisoners was the dormitory-style living arrangements, with rooms separated by partitions rather than actually enclosed by walls. This provides very little in the way of privacy or sound-proofing. There are also two rooms in a caravan next to the main accommodation unit. The caravan is also in poor condition, but these rooms are sought after by prisoners because of the relative privacy they offer. The ablutions block is separate to the accommodation unit, and is split into a section for officers and a section for prisoners. The prisoners' section contains two showers, two toilets and one urinal only, which is not adequate to meet the needs of 12 prisoners. Demand for the limited facilities available was high during peak times in the morning and evening.
- 5.5 The officers' quarters are also very basic, with a small kitchen and partitioned areas for each officer to sleep in during their shift at the work camp. There are no ablutions available in the officers' quarters, but a shower and toilet could easily be installed. The necessary plumbing and a wet area already exist; all that would be required is the appropriate fittings. This would improve the officers' amenities, but also allow the existing officer's section in the

## KELLERBERRIN WORK CAMP

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ablutions block (including one shower and two toilets) to be made available to prisoners and alleviate demand.

- 5.6 Unfortunately, such improvements and general maintenance issues have not been addressed at the work camp for some time. The work camp has been subject to uncertainty surrounding its future for an extended period (see below), and as a consequence there has been a lack of commitment to repairs and minor works.

### FOOD

- 5.7 In contrast to the general view of food at Wooroloo Prison Farm, prisoners were highly satisfied with the quality and quantity of food available at the work camp. This is largely because all produce is sourced locally and is therefore fresh. Prisoners do all their own cooking in the kitchen situated in the common area. The cooking facilities were in good condition and well-maintained.

### WORK AND ACTIVITIES

- 5.8 Prisoners at the work camp carry out a wide range of work around Kellerberrin and the nearby towns of Tammin and Merredin. This has included gardening in public parks and reserves, painting and maintenance of community buildings, and various work in local sporting clubs and schools. Consultation with the local communities prior to the inspection indicated that there was a great deal of local support for the work camp and the work carried out by prisoners is highly valued. The work camp represents a way for these regional towns to undertake projects that they would not otherwise be able to afford. In this sense, the work camp is a very real opportunity for prisoners to provide reparation to the community.
- 5.9 The work camp has increasingly been undertaking projects in Wyalkatchem, although it takes around one hour to drive there from Kellerberrin. The work camp and the Shire of Wyalkatchem have commenced refurbishment of an old railway barracks, and have plans to create a satellite work camp on the site. The work camp officer and prisoners would be able to spend several days a week living out of the refurbished Wyalkatchem barracks and thereby minimise travel time to and from Kellerberrin. This is only a temporary initiative because the site will eventually be used by various community groups. In the meantime, however, it has provided meaningful work for many prisoners and will ultimately be of great benefit to the town.
- 5.10 Access to recreation was generally good at the work camp, and a highly-valued freedom among prisoners. Prisoners are permitted to run, walk or cycle around the town for exercise, and use local facilities such as the golf course. Prisoners are also allowed to play in local sporting competitions and had often been part of the town's cricket and football teams. The only limitation on recreation at the work camp was the size of the gymnasium, which was really too small for any more than two prisoners at a time. There had been vague plans to expand the gymnasium for some time, but like many small projects around the site, this had been delayed repeatedly because of uncertainty over the camp's future.

## KELLERBERRIN WORK CAMP

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- 5.11 Prisoners also identified the arrangements for visits as a highlight of the work camp. Most prisoners were fortunate enough to have family visiting them regularly. Visits take place between 12.00pm and 3.00pm on weekends and public holidays. Visitors will typically stay in Kellerberrin for the weekend and attend the visit session on both Saturday and Sunday. The visits are very relaxed and usually involve a barbecue for all visitors and prisoners. There was some need to expand visits facilities because there is limited space available under cover during inclement weather. Again, progress on this issue had been stalled by the uncertainty over the camp's future.

### ACCESS TO SERVICES

- 5.12 Access to other services at the work camp is very limited. For the most part, prisoners are required to return to Wooroloo Prison Farm for any particular needs. There is no capacity at the work camp to deliver medical services, education and training, rehabilitative programs or re-entry services.
- 5.13 The Transitional Manager from Wooroloo attends the work camp on an occasional basis to inform prisoners of the services available to them, but most services could only be accessed by returning to the prison. The prisoners at the work camp were extremely reluctant to do this because of their negative view of the prison, and anecdotally an increasing number of prisoners were arranging to be released directly from the work camp rather than return to Wooroloo for release.
- 5.14 The lack of training opportunities could be addressed if all work camp officers possessed a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, but unfortunately not all of them had obtained this qualification. The Department should support and encourage all work camp officers to obtain this certification. This would provide more opportunity for prisoners to learn valuable skills and gain accreditations, all of which will assist in a successful return to the community.

### THE FUTURE OF THE WORK CAMP

- 5.15 It was clear that many of the issues for the work camp had not been addressed because of continuing uncertainty about whether it would remain in Kellerberrin. At the time of the inspection, the Department of Corrective Services had secured \$10 million in funding to replace the Kellerberrin Work Camp with a custom-built facility somewhere in the Wheatbelt region. It will, however, be some years before this new work camp is operational, and in the interim there is a risk that the Kellerberrin Work Camp will continue to be neglected. Given current population pressures throughout the prison system, it may be the case that the Department is reluctant to entirely abandon Kellerberrin and may continue to house prisoners there. Kellerberrin is certainly still a viable work camp site, but the facilities are in definite need of general and ongoing repair and maintenance.

# Appendix 1

## THE DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSE TO THE 2009 RECOMMENDATIONS

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Acceptance Level/Response/Timeframe</b>
<b>Care and wellbeing</b> 1. The prison should improve the level and standard of interaction between staff and prisoners.	<b>Supported</b> The relationship between staff and prisoners is a key contributing factor to dynamic security and a safe establishment. As such staff will be encouraged to embrace unit management principles and will be expected to interact more proactively with prisoners. Line managers will be tasked to ensure that staff engage with prisoners and demonstrate a greater presence throughout the prison allowing for more positive interaction. In addition it will be the responsibility of line managers to ensure that staff do not congregate in wing offices but are out supervising prisoners appropriately. <b>6 months</b>
<b>Human rights</b> 2. The multiple occupancy of prisoners in cells not designed for that purpose should not be an accepted accommodation model for prisons in Western Australia. Where this is temporarily unavoidable, compensatory processes should be implemented to mitigate risk and disadvantage.	<b>Supported in Part</b> The Department aims to manage the prisoner population in appropriate accommodation, however given current population pressures this is both impractical and impossible. During times of high prison populations, like what is currently being experienced, strategies are employed to mitigate risk to individual and facilities as a whole. Evidently the Department continues to work towards establishing greater accommodation capacity and it is anticipated that in the long term this will alleviate the current pressure. This is however subject to Government support. <b>6 months</b>
<b>Staffing issues</b> 3. The prison should establish a communication strategy to ensure regular, accurate and comprehensive communication of information both up and down the reporting lines for staff.	<b>Supported</b> The Superintendent will take responsibility for the development of a full written communication strategy for the prison, this will include details of the manner in which information is to be disseminated to staff, consultation processes, the sharing of future directions and the process from staff contributions.  The strategy will provide details of each meeting within the prison, including the frequency, purpose and members. The strategy will be published for all staff to see. <b>6 months</b>

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Acceptance Level/Response/Timeframe</b>
<p><b>Staffing issues</b></p> <p>4. The Department should ensure that all operational areas at Wooroloo Prison Farm are adequately resourced in anticipation of the proposed capacity increase.</p>	<p><b>Supported</b></p> <p>The requirements for an increase in the prison population to 360 prisoners is under development at Wooroloo. The accommodation plan has been approved and is being implemented. The additional infrastructure, equipment and staffing requirements are currently under development and will be submitted for approval in the near future. Staff safety is a critical issue within the prison environment and planning will incorporate these matters into the final plan.</p> <p><b>6 months</b></p>
<p><b>Staffing issues</b></p> <p>5. The Department should provide additional staffing on the senior management team at Wooroloo Prison Farm until such time as the prison returns to its previous high level of performance and is prepared for the proposed capacity increase.</p>	<p><b>Supported</b></p> <p>The Department has in the last 12 months created additional positions to support prison management teams. Each prison now have additional resources in the form of a Finance Coordinator and an HR Coordinator. The Department has conducted a review of prison management teams and an additional management position was considered to be of benefit. The creation of an Assistant Superintendent Prison Services is under consideration across the State. In the interim, additional support will be provided to Wooroloo.</p> <p><b>6-12 months</b></p>
<p><b>Care and wellbeing</b></p> <p>6. The prison should maximise opportunities for prisoners to maintain contact with family and friends. For example, by increasing the number and availability of telephones, promoting the use of video visits, and other innovations.</p>	<p><b>Supported</b></p> <p>The prison has recently increased the visit arrangements to provide for the anticipated 250 prisoner population and while this had been working well, the increased population beyond that number has created challenges. Video conferencing arrangements are presently under review as this facility is unable to accommodate the increased population. Opportunities for improvement and greater use of this arrangement will be sought.</p> <p>The prison telephone access is under pressure and the prison has initiated the request for immediate installation of six more phones. The order has been placed and the prison is awaiting installation.</p> <p><b>6 months</b></p>

## Appendix 2

### LOCALLY REMEDIABLE ISSUES

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Ongoing grievances and personal conflicts between staff must be resolved. Restoring confidence in the staff grievance system will be a necessary part of this process [2.35].

The training officer, with the support and cooperation of Wooroloo management, should devise processes to ensure that a regular training schedule is in place and all staff should be made aware that it is necessary for them to attend [2.58] – [2.63].

Regular meetings between contracted programs staff and prison management should be initiated to ensure that management are aware of programs activity and programs staff are aware of any issues that may affect their delivery of programs. [3.12] – [3.13]

The gratuities system should be reviewed [3.35] – [3.38].

The visitors' car park should be bituminised [3.47].

Some sort of cover should be erected in the grassed visits area to provide shelter from the weather [3.50].

Supper should be reintroduced for prisoners in standard accommodation and prisoners should be permitted to take a defined amount of food (especially fruit) from the dining rooms back to their cells [4.9].

The prisoners working in reception should be members of the peer support team [4.22].

The Indigenous Services Committee should be re-established [4.32].

## Appendix 3

### SCORECARD ASSESSMENT OF THE PROGRESS AGAINST THE 2006 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation Number	Report No. 39, <i>Report of an Announced Inspection of Wooroloo Prison Farm.</i>  By type of Recommendation / Duration	Assessment of the Department's Implementations				
		Poor	Less than Acceptable	Acceptable	More than Acceptable	Excellent
1.	<b>Custody and Containment</b> That the PID and MOT systems be retained and upgraded to work in concert with the new security fence to improve the safety of the prison, prisoners, staff and the community.			● 14		
2.	<b>Custody and Containment</b> The Department act to ensure the ability of Wooroloo to take immediate and appropriate action in the event of fire fighting emergencies and to preserve the life of staff and prisoners, including within buildings		● 15			
3.	<b>Care and Wellbeing</b> The Department conduct an evaluation and review of the policies and operations of Drug Free Units (DFU) throughout Western Australia. In the interim, Wooroloo should immediately devise an action plan to address the shortage of self-care accommodation at the prison.			●		
4.	<b>Staffing issues</b> With regard to social visits:  a) Wooroloo should assess the need for additional uniformed staff to supervise visits sessions; and  b) The Department should address the shortage of non-contact visits facilities at Wooroloo to ensure prisoners are not deprived of visits with family due to infrastructure deficits.			●		
5.	<b>Care and Wellbeing</b> A review should be undertaken of reporting arrangements for the position of Prisoner Support Officer to clarify the ability of the Superintendent to direct and be accountable for the delivery of that service on site at Wooroloo.			●		
6.	<b>Care and Wellbeing</b> The Department should review policies and procedures regarding the accommodation of foreign national prisoners being held on illegal fishing offences, including the applicability of security classification reviews and release arrangements.			N/A		

14 The MOT (Monitor Officer Transmitter) system has been replaced by the more functional PDA (Personal Duress Alarm) system. However, the PID (Personal Identification Device) system was abandoned following construction of the perimeter fence.



SCORECARD ASSESSMENT OF THE PROGRESS AGAINST THE  
2006 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation Number	Report No. 39, <i>Report of an Announced Inspection of Wooroloo Prison Farm.</i>  By type of Recommendation / Duration	Assessment of the Department's Implementations				
		Poor	Less than Acceptable	Acceptable	More than Acceptable	Excellent
7.	<b>Rehabilitation</b> An action plan should be developed to ensure the better integration and coordination of re-entry services provided at Wooroloo.			●		
8.	<b>Care and Wellbeing</b> The Department should invest in a full evaluation of its Offender Services Division to assess whether it is meeting the needs of prisoners and whether it is meeting the demands and expectations of the Department itself.			●		
9.	<b>Rehabilitation</b> Wooroloo should investigate ways of increasing prisoner participation in accredited training within its employment opportunities at the prison.		●			
10.	<b>Rehabilitation</b> That the Department investigate viability of the invigoration of industries across prisons in Western Australia by implementing a similar process to that which was undertaken at Wooroloo in 2004.		●			
11.	<b>Reparation</b> That Wooroloo expand prisoner participation in Section 94 employment opportunities to enhance its role as a provider of re-entry services.			●		
12.	<b>Administration and accountability</b> That the Department immediately act to appoint a substantive management team at Wooroloo.		● 16			
13.	<b>Staffing issues</b> That the Department undertake a comprehensive evaluation of all service and infrastructure requirements, as well as uniformed and non-uniformed staffing requirements, in the event of the approved prisoner capacity of Wooroloo being increased to 215 and then 250.		●			

- 15 Essential upgrades to fire hydrant pressure within the prison were ongoing at the time of the inspection. When this project concludes, the fire fighting capacity of the prison will be at an acceptable level.
- 16 While there was a substantive management team in place at the time of the inspection, this had only been the case for two months. Many of the issues identified during the 2009 inspection were linked to the instability and uncertainty caused by the absence of a substantive management team in the three years since the previous inspection.

## Appendix 4

### THE INSPECTION TEAM

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Professor Neil Morgan	Inspector
Barry Cram	Deputy Inspector
Natalie Gibson	Director of Operations
Jason Donaldson	Principal Inspections and Research Officer
Kieran Artelaris	Inspections and Research Officer
Janina Surma	Inspections and Research Officer
Francine Mair	Inspections and Research Officer
Joseph Wallam	Community Liaison Officer
Leigh Garrett	Expert adviser, Offenders Aid and Rehabilitation Services South Australia
Cheryl Wiltshire	Expert adviser, Department of Education and Training
Dace Tomsons	Expert adviser, Drug and Alcohol Office
Angela Rizk	Expert adviser, Drug and Alcohol Office
Dr Mike Jordan	Expert adviser, Department of Health

## Appendix 5

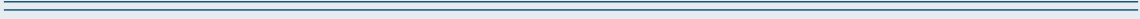
### KEY DATES

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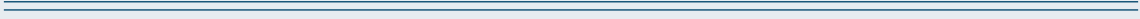
Formal notification of announced inspection	20 January 2009
Pre-inspection Wooroloo community consultation	10 March 2009
Pre-inspection Kellerberrin community consultation	11 March 2009
Start of on-site phase	19 April 2009
Completion of on-site phase	24 April 2009
Inspection exit debrief	24 April 2009
Draft Report sent to the Department of Corrective Services	16 July 2009
Draft report returned by the Department of Corrective Services	1 September 2009
Declaration of Prepared Report	8 September 2009



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