



OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR
OF CUSTODIAL SERVICES

Prisoner and staff perceptions of WA custodial facilities from 2010 - 2012

September 2014

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1 Background

- 1.1 The Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services is required to inspect and report to Parliament on all of Western Australia's prisons, juvenile detention centres, court custody centres and prescribed lock up facilities at least once every three years. A full cycle of inspections occurs once all facilities have been visited. The Office is currently undertaking the fifth cycle of inspections.
- 1.2 As part of the inspection process of prisons, standard surveys are conducted of staff and prisoners. Questions generally remain stable through a cycle, and are based on subject areas which reflect the Office's inspection standards. The method of distribution for each survey is adapted for each prison.
- 1.3 This report provides a summary of findings from the fourth round of inspections conducted from early 2010 to the end of 2012. During this time the prison system was under significant stress from increasing prisoner numbers. In recognition of this, the government allocated a significant amount of funding to a capacity building project that was ongoing throughout this period. Investments were directed almost exclusively at male prisoners, even though there was a disproportionate growth of women prisoners at this time.
- 1.4 Five new units were added to: Albany Regional Prison (one unit) and at Hakea and Casuarina Prisons (two units at each). Most of these new units became operational in 2011-2012. The opening of new units usually corresponded with the closing of other units to allow for renovation. Accommodation units were also added at Karnet Prison Farm, while Pardelup was upgraded from a work camp to a prison. All of these changes caused considerable disruption to various prisons.
- 1.5 In total 13 prisons were surveyed during this cycle, five in the metropolitan area and eight in regional areas. Information from Karnet Prison Farm has not been included in this analysis as the inspection of Karnet took place prior to the development of the 4th cycle's new standardised survey, and therefore information gained was not comparable.
- 1.6 The first section of this report comments on the responses from the prisoner surveys, while the later section summarises responses from the staff surveys.

2 Prisoners

Respondent profile

- 2.1 Prisoners were surveyed during the inspections carried out between January 2010 and December 2012. With the exception of Boronia Pre-release centre, response rates to prisoner surveys from each facility were generally low, ranging from 12 per cent to 56 per cent of the daily average population of each facility over the three years.¹

Facility	Respondents (n)	Average prisoner population	Prisoner population (%)
Acacia Prison	114	926	12.3
Albany Regional Prison	114	275	41.4
Bandyup Women's Prison	103	223	46.2
Boronia Pre-release Centre	62	70	88.6
Broome Regional Prison	47	125	37.6
Bunbury Regional Prison	104	293	35.5
Casuarina Prison	196	623	31.5
Eastern Goldfields Regional Prison	42	113	37.2
Greenough Regional Prison	112	267	41.9
Hakea Prison	139	797	17.4
Pardelup Prison Farm	28	84	33.3
Roebourne Regional Prison	92	164	56.1
Wooroloo Prison Farm	59	313	18.8

- 2.2 While the response rate was low, the overall profile of those that responded was reflective of the prisoner population. There were 1212 responses to the prisoner surveys, from an average population of approximately 4750² prisoners over the three year period.

Table 1

Demographics of survey respondents compared to the demographics of the prisoner population during 2010 - 2012

¹ Based on the average daily prison population taken on the 15 day every four months, over the three year period

² *ibid*

	Survey respondents	Prisoner population
Location		
Regional prison	44.47%	29.42%
Metro prison	55.53%	70.73%
Aboriginality/Nationality³		
Aboriginal	45.46%	39.24%
Torres Strait Island	0.99%	Not available
Foreign nationals	10.15%	8.98%
Non-Aboriginal ⁴	49.17%	60.76%
Prisoner security status		
Maximum	10.97%	7.99%
Medium	47.61%	58.06%
Minimum	36.47%	33.95%
Situation		
First time in prison	41.01%	Not available
Not first time in prison	57.67%	Not available
Sharing a cell	61.63%	Not available
Not sharing a cell	35.89%	Not available

- 2.3 Over two thirds (68.4%) of the Aboriginal respondents, were not in prison for the first time, compared to half (49.8%) the non-Aboriginal people. Aboriginal respondents were more likely to be sharing a cell than non-Aboriginal people (73.7% vs 53.5%).

Quality of life

- 2.4 Prisoners were asked to rate their quality of life between one and ten, with ten indicating the highest quality of life. The average score was 4.92.⁵ This varied depending on security status, whether the respondent was in a regional or metropolitan prison, or if they were sharing a cell. However, with the exception of maximum security prisoners who rated their quality of life at only 3.76, all other cohorts were close to the average (between 4.5 – 5.5).

Table 2

Average quality of life scores for various cohorts of prisoners

	Survey respondents
Location	
Regional prison	5.18
Metro prison	4.73

³ Percentage of survey respondents who identified as Aboriginal, Torres Strait Island or Foreign Nationals.

Percentage does not include those who did not respond to the questions.

⁴ Includes foreign nationals

⁵ 81 people (6.7% of all participants) did not respond to this question.

Survey respondents	
Aboriginality/Nationality⁶	
Aboriginal	5.01
Non-Aboriginal ⁷	4.84
Prisoner security status	
Maximum	3.76
Medium	4.87
Minimum	5.36
Situation	
Sharing a cell	4.73
Not sharing a cell	5.26

Relationships with staff

- 2.5 When prisoners were asked who they would seek help from, respondents indicated they were most likely to seek help and support from other prisoners. If staff members were sought, prison officers or senior officers were the most likely to be approached.
- 2.6 Over one in eight respondents indicated they would not turn to any of these sources for help either regularly or sometimes.

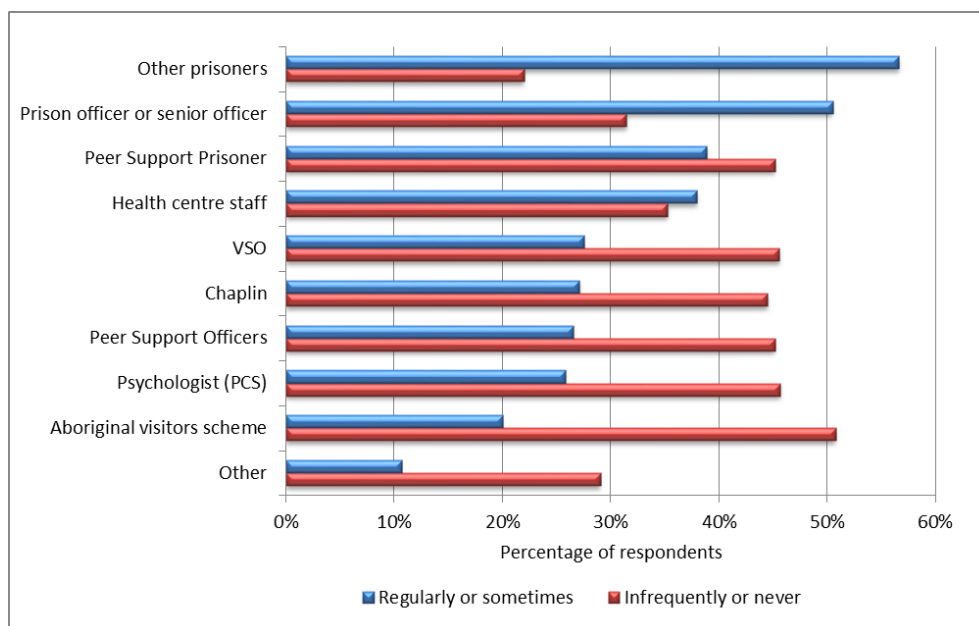


Figure 1

Percentage of respondents who seek help from various sources of assistance.

- 2.7 Over half of the respondents (50.7%) indicated they would rarely or never seek assistance from the Aboriginal visitors scheme, but this result was skewed by

⁶ Percentage of survey respondents who identified as Aboriginal, Torres Strait Island or Foreign Nationals. Percentage does not include those who did not respond to the questions.

⁷ Includes foreign nationals

non-Aboriginal respondents. Only a third of Aboriginal respondents (33.6%) indicated they would rarely or never seek assistance from this scheme, whereas 67.8 per cent of non-Aboriginal respondents indicated the same.

2.8 The older the respondent, the less likely they were to report regularly seeking assistance from other prisoners. Over a third of respondents (35.0%) aged 18-25 indicated they sought help and support from other prisoners on a regular basis, as opposed to only 12.5 per cent of respondents over the age of 51 years. Older respondents were more likely to report seeking support from prison officers or senior officers.

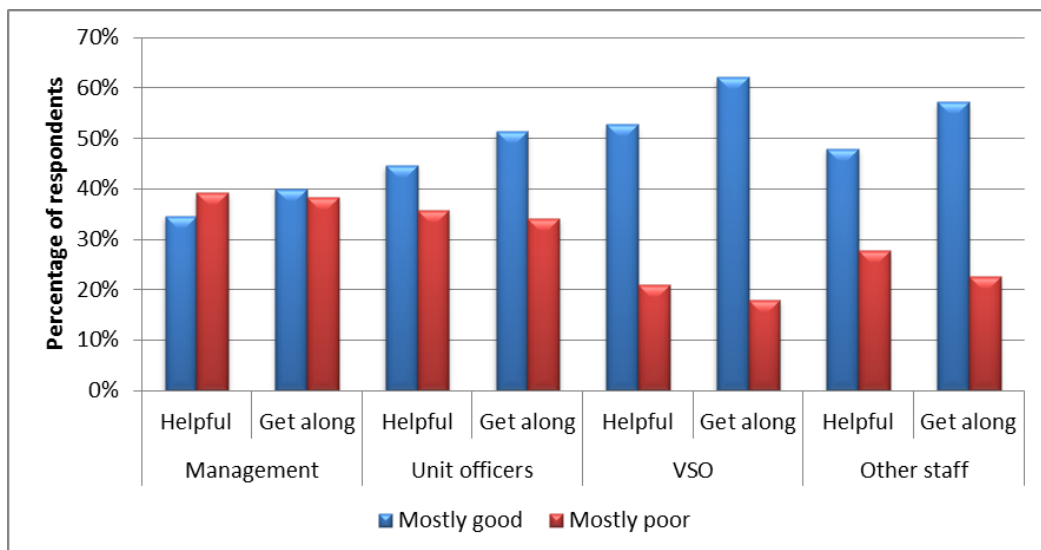


Figure 2

Respondents perceptions of staff helpfulness and their ability to get along with prisoners

2.9 Respondents felt that prison management was the least helpful and supportive staff group and were least likely to get along with prisoners.

2.10 Vocational Support Officers (VSO) were perceived to be the most able to get along with prisoners, although this was not even across all respondents. Non-Aboriginal people were far more likely to report getting along with VSO's (70.1%) than Aboriginal people (52.6%). Maximum security prisoners had the poorest perception of staff-prisoner relationships. In particular, less than a quarter of maximum security prisoners (24.8%) believed management's ability to get along with staff was mostly good, as opposed to 38.3 per cent of medium security prisoners, and 47.3% of minimum security prisoners.

2.11 The perception of management's ability to get along with prisoners was also influenced by age, with the older demographic being far more likely to perceive the relationship as mostly good. Almost two thirds of over 50 year old prisoners

believed management’s ability to get along with staff was good, while only a third of 18-25 year old prisoners believed this to be the case.

2.12 Almost half the respondents (46.8%) felt that prison officers did not treat prisoners with dignity as opposed to 35.2 per cent who felt the opposite.⁸ There was a fairly even split of responses on whether prisoners felt that prison officers applied the rules fairly, were respectful during searches and took care not to hurt prisoners when force was used.



Figure 3

Respondents perceptions of staff fairness and respect to prisoners.

2.13 A quarter of the respondents felt that the treatment of prisoners in all four categories listed was mostly good, against a quarter who felt that prisoner treatment was poor in all four categories.

2.14 Aboriginal prisoners were far less likely to believe that staff were fair and respectful to prisoners than non-Aboriginal respondents. Specifically

- 37.8% of Aboriginal respondents believed staff applied the rules fairly as opposed to 50.0% of non-Aboriginal respondents.
- 33.2% of Aboriginal respondents believed staff conducted respectful cell searches as opposed to 51.0% of non-Aboriginal respondents.
- 29.8% of Aboriginal respondents believed staff did not intentionally hurt prisoners while applying force as opposed to 48.0% of non-Aboriginal respondents.
- 28.5% of Aboriginal respondents believed staff treated prisoners with dignity as opposed to 41.1.0% of non-Aboriginal respondents.

⁸ 18% of respondents did not answer this question.

- 2.15 The most trusted people to help with a complaint or issue were peer support prisoners or unit managers. Prison management was least trusted to assist with a complaint or issue.
- 2.16 A large number of respondents (40.6%) stated they did not trust ACCESS, the Department of Corrective Services compliant service, to help with their complaint or issue. Similarly, 41.2 per cent of respondents indicated they did not trust the Aboriginal Visitor Scheme (AVS), although the later was skewed by non-Aboriginal respondents. More Aboriginal respondents indicated they did not trust the AVS to help (34.7%) than trusted the scheme (28.0%).⁹

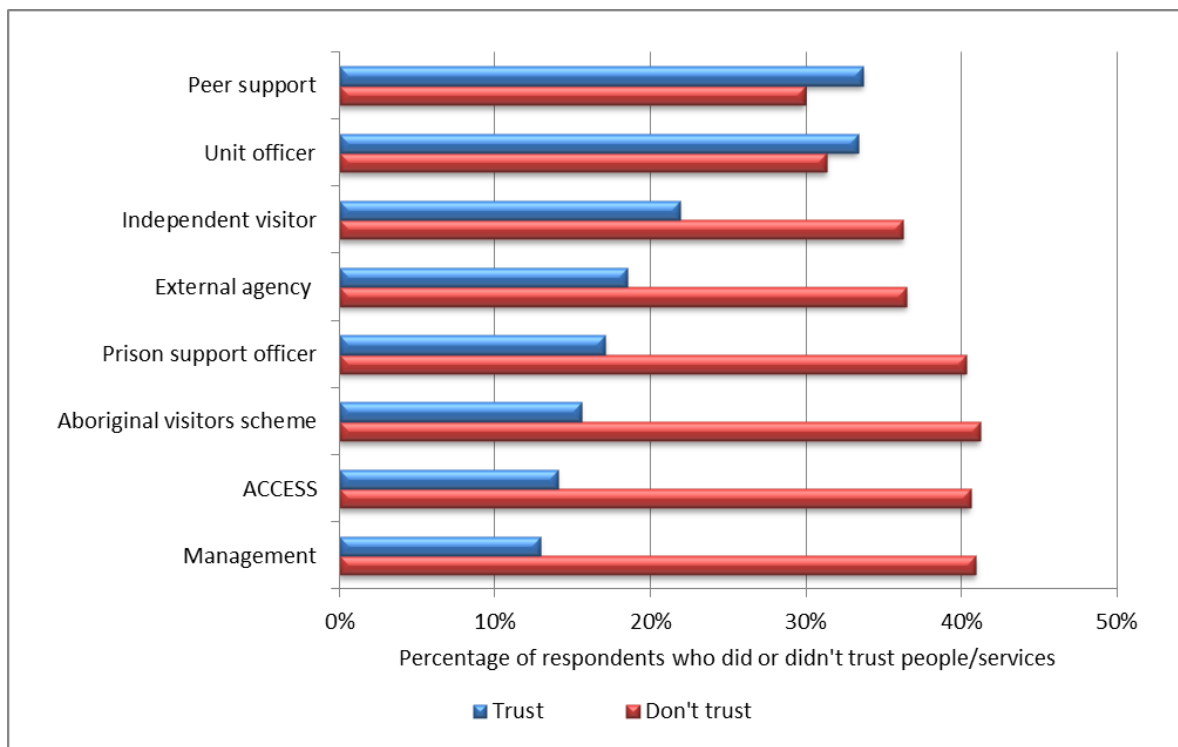


Figure 4
Respondents level of trust, in staff and other support services, to assist with complaints or issues.

- 2.17 Respondents from metro prisons were more likely to indicate they did not trust management to help them with an issue (46.1%) than respondents in the regional prisons (34.5%). Maximum security respondents were far more likely to state they did not trust management (53.4), than medium security prisoners (39.9%) and minimum security respondents (36.7%).
- 2.18 Aboriginal respondents were far more likely to trust peer support prisoners (40.3%) than non-Aboriginal respondents (28.4%).

⁹ 37.4% of Aboriginal respondents did not answer this question.

Satisfaction with the prison

- 2.19 A third of respondents (37.8%) were 'mostly happy' with the condition of their cell, unit and prison overall. Less than one in five respondents (18.6%) were unhappy with all three. Other respondents were happy with some conditions but not others.
- 2.20 Almost half the respondents from the metropolitan prisons reported being 'mostly unhappy' with prison conditions, compared with only 33.6 per cent of respondents in regional prisons. Respondents with a maximum security rating reported being 'mostly unhappy' with the prison far more frequently (59.4%) than medium (43.3%), or minimum security prisoners (36.7%).
- 2.21 Most respondents (73.8%) believed prisoners kept themselves clean in prison.
- 2.22 While over half the respondents (55.8%) thought the prison did enough to stop drugs coming into the prison, almost half (47.7%) felt the prison did not do enough to assist people with drug addictions.
- 2.23 Almost a third of respondents (63.7%) were smokers. A third of these smokers (66.6%) were not offered assistance to quit by the prison. This varied considerably between facilities, with 87.1 per cent of smokers in Greenough Regional Prison not being offered assistance compared on only a half of smokers (50.7%) in Acacia. In general, more smokers in the metro area reported being offered assistance to quit smoking than those in regional prisons (31.2% vs 23.4%).
- 2.24 Two thirds of respondents (66.6%) felt safe in the prison, compared with 19.6 per cent who did not feel safe.¹⁰ Respondents who were experiencing their first time in prison were more likely to report feeling safe (72.2%) than those that had been in prison previously (62.8%). Non-Aboriginal people reported feeling safe more often (70.3%) than Aboriginal people (61.9%) although Aboriginal people were twice as likely as non-Aboriginal people to decline to answer the question (9.3% vs 18.2%). There was little difference in perceptions of safety between metro and regional prisons.
- 2.25 Only half the respondents who were rated as maximum security, reported feeling safe, compared to 65.5 per cent of medium security respondents and 74.2 per cent of minimum security respondents.

¹⁰ 13.8 per cent of respondents did not answer this question.

Orientation

- 2.26 Over half the respondents (58.8%) felt they were provided with the information they needed when entering the prison.¹¹ This varied considerably between facilities with over three quarters of respondents at Boronia and Roebourne (77.4% and 76.1% respectively) reporting being provided with necessary information, compared with less than half in Bandyup Women’s Prison (46.6%). There was little difference between respondents who were in prison for the first time compared to those who were not.
- 2.27 Over two thirds of respondents (68.3%) reported being upset or very upset when they first came into the prison. Almost half of these people (44.6%) felt staff did not treat them well when they arrived. Prisoners who reported as being very upset were most likely to report that staff did not treat them well.

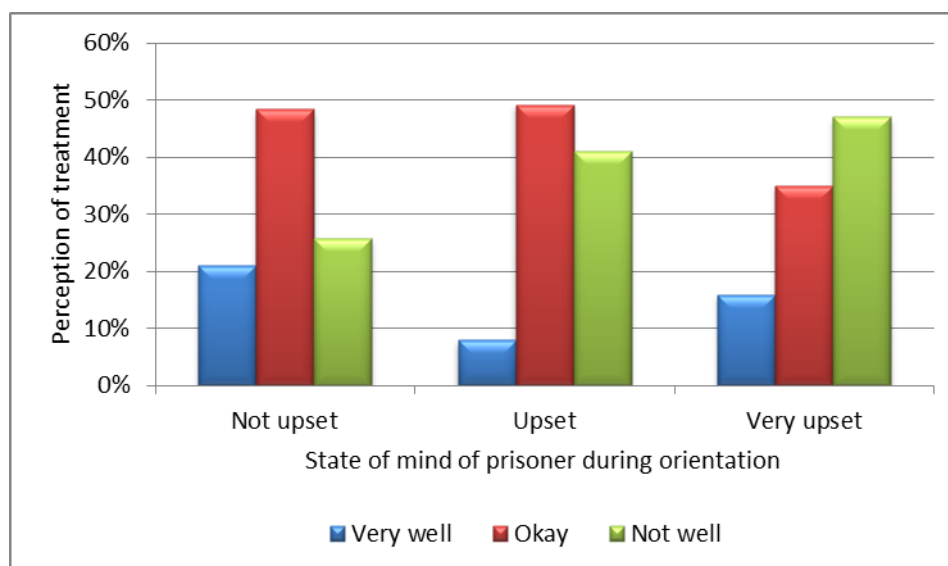


Figure 5

Perceptions of treatment based on the state of mind of the prisoner when they arrived at the prison.

- 2.28 Prisoners in metro areas were far more likely to report not being treated well compared to those in regional prisons (41.3% vs 28.8%).

Facilities and services

- 2.29 Over half the respondents (50.4%) were unhappy with the quality of food in the prisons. More than one in five also stated they were unhappy with food quantity, access to recreation, and clothing.
- 2.30 Over half were happy with their access to the library (57.2%), bedding (55.3%), laundry (51.8%) and canteen services (51.4%). .

¹¹ Greenough Regional Prison was removed from the results of this question as an error in survey delivery led to a very low (37.5%) response rate.

2.31 Respondents rated as maximum security were more likely to report being unhappy with all facilities and services, in particular over three quarters (67.7%) reported being unhappy with food quality. Maximum security respondents were also more likely to report being unhappy with laundry facilities and clothing (both 58.7%) than respondents with minimum and medium security ratings (36.1% and 43.3% respectively).

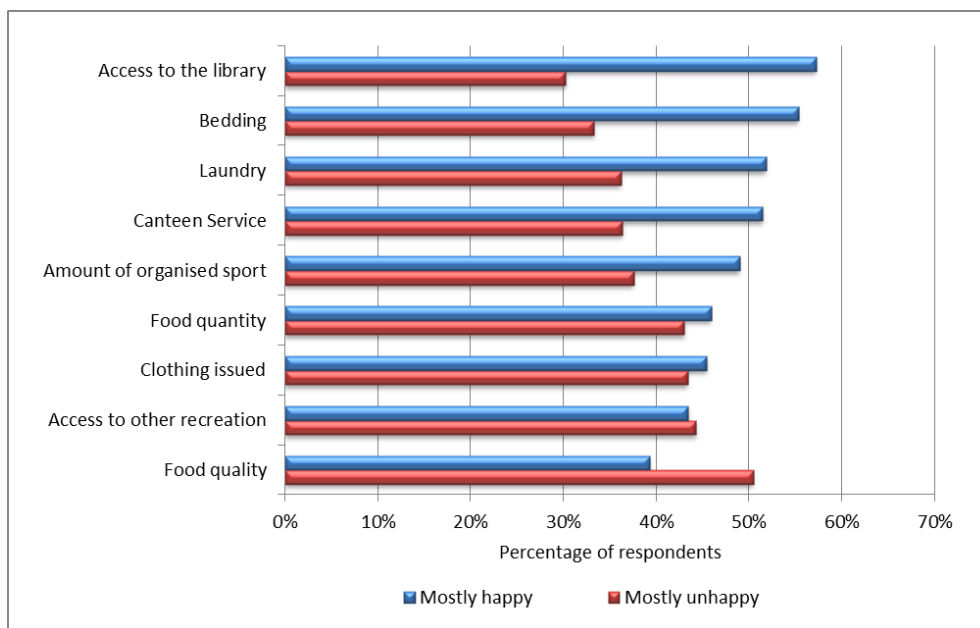


Figure 6
Respondents satisfaction with various facilities and services in prisons across WA.

2.32 Respondents aged over 51 years reported being happy with facilities and services more frequently than other age groups. In particular this age group reported being happy with laundry facilities and clothing issued (61.6% and 60.2% respectively) more frequently than respondents overall (51.8% and 45.4% respectively). The older age group were more likely to be happy with the amount of organised sport (58.0%) and other recreation (54.6%) than respondents overall (48.9% and 43.4% respectively).

2.33 There was considerable variation between prisons. Respondents from Bandyup Women’s Prison (69.9%) and Hakea Prison (68.4%) were most likely to report being ‘mostly unhappy’ with the quality of food. Conversely, respondents at Albany Regional Prison (74.6%) and Boronia Pre-release centre (77.4%), predominately reported being happy with the quality of their food.

2.34 Approximately three quarters (72.9%) of respondents at Wooroloo were happy with the amount of organised sport provided by the facility, whereas only 39.1% of respondents at Roebourne felt the same way. Almost all respondents at

Pardelup (92.9%) were happy with their access to the library, whereas less than half of all respondents (48.0%) were happy with their access.

- 2.35 Overall, almost half the respondents (48.6%) reported having a case conference, and the majority (61.1%) stated they had ‘their say’ during the conference.

Culture

- 2.36 Four out of ten respondents (40.6%) felt staff understood their culture, with a slightly higher number of people (42.2%) believing staff respected their culture. These numbers were lower for Aboriginal respondents. Most Aboriginal people felt that staff neither respected nor understood their culture (53.7%), with only a quarter (24.5%) believing that staff understood and respected their culture. Interestingly, 9.6 per cent of Aboriginal respondents felt that staff respected their culture but didn’t understand it and six per cent felt that staff understood their culture but didn’t respect it.

- 2.37 There was considerable variation among respondents depending on where they were living prior to entering prison. Respondents from interstate or overseas were the only people who were more likely to report their culture was understood rather than their culture was respected.

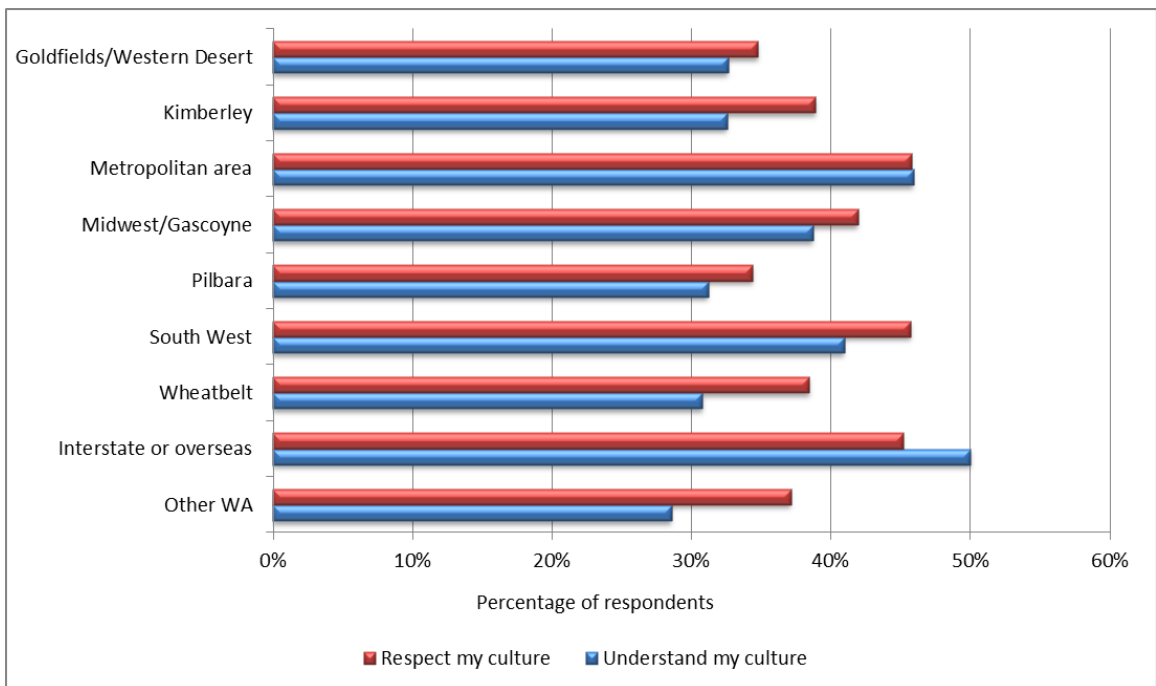


Figure 7
Respondents perceptions of staff respect and understanding of their culture by origin of the prisoner.

Health services

- 2.38 Respondents were generally 'not happy' with their access to dental care and medical specialists. Almost half the respondents (45.5%) stated they were happy with access to general health services, however, this was inconsistent across all groups, with older prisoners being more satisfied with the services. Over half the minimum security respondents (50.9%) stated they were happy with access to general health services, while only 44.4% of medium prisoners and only 36.8 per cent of maximum security prisoners were satisfied.

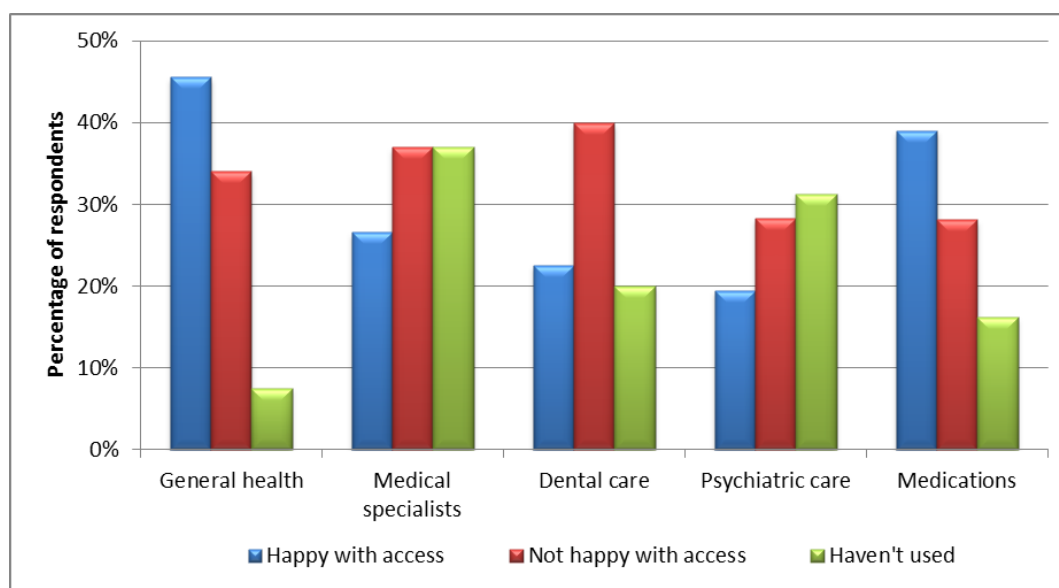


Figure 8

Respondents level of satisfaction with access to health services.

- 2.39 More regional respondents reported being happy with access to health services than their metropolitan counterparts. In particular they were more likely to report being happy with access to general health care (48.4% vs 43.2%) and access to specialists (29.5% vs 24.2%). The exception was with dental services where metro respondents were more likely to report being happy with access (25.3%) than respondents from the region (19.1%).
- 2.40 An almost identical pattern existed for respondents perceptions of the quality of health services, with metro respondents being more likely to report the quality of services were poor for general health (39.8% vs 27.1%) and by specialists (38.5% vs 27.5%). Again the exception was in dental care where less respondents from the regional area reported being happy with the service (18.2%) versus those from the metro area (25.0%).
- 2.41 There was also a similar pattern in responses depending on security status with maximum security prisoners being less happy with general health care quality than respondents with medium and minimum security ratings.

Structured day

- 2.42 Only 7.5 per cent of respondents indicated they were not working. Most spent their day at work (39.27%), doing education and work (18.7%) or undertaking education and training (10.6%).
- 2.43 Although the length of time prisoners indicated they were working was unreliable¹², 15 per cent of those who engaged in some form of work indicated their work took less than one hour per day over a seven day week.
- 2.44 Almost a third of respondents who worked, did so in an industrial area.

Table 3

Type of work undertaken by respondents

Work area	Percentage of people who worked (n=702)
Industries	31.1%
Unit activities	21.3%
Gardens and maintenance	12.3%
External activity	3.9%
Other	22.5%
Did not specify	9.1%

- 2.45 Aboriginal respondents were less likely than non-Aboriginal respondents to work in industries (21.7% vs 40.1%), but were twice as likely to be working in gardens and maintenance (16.5% vs 8.5%). Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people were equally likely to be working in external activities and unit activities.
- 2.46 Three quarters (74.1%) of people who worked in an external activity believed that their work would help them in the future. Two thirds (68.6%) of those working in gardens or maintenance, and half (47.3%) of those working in industries also believed this to be true. Only a third (32.9%) of people undertaking unit activities believed it would be helpful.
- 2.47 Most people undertaking some form of education (80.1%) believed this would help them in the future. Only half of the respondents who were undertaking a program believed this would be helpful in the future.

¹² 7.7% of the respondents indicated they worked in excess of 38 hours per week which is highly unlikely in a prison environment.

Transport

- 2.48 Most respondents who had been transported in the two months prior to the survey being administered, felt the state of the vehicles used for transport, and staff respect shown during transport, was acceptable. However, they were less accepting of the comfort of the vehicle. Half the respondents who had been transported for a court appearance indicated the comfort of the vehicle was poor.

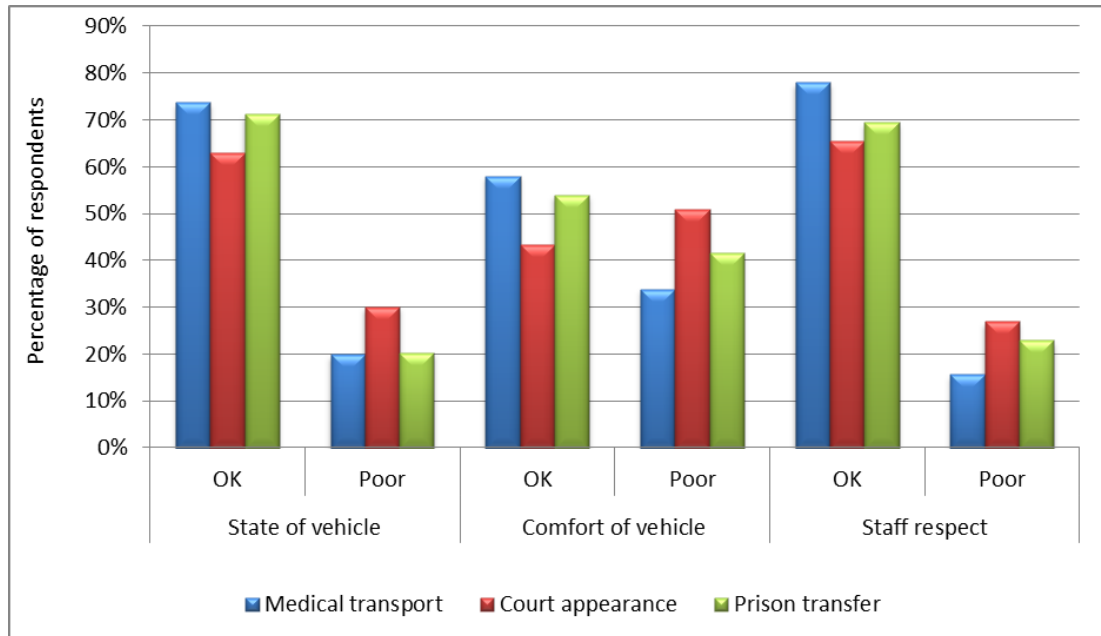


Figure 9

Respondents perceptions of the quality and comfort of transports and the level of staff respect shown during the transport.

- 2.49 Respondents were most likely to be positive about transports for medical purposes, with over half (58.1%) stating the vehicle they were transported in was comfortable. This may reflect the alternative modes of transport that are often used when transporting prisoners for medical purposes.

Outside contact

- 2.50 Most respondents (78.1%) were happy with their telephone contact with their family. Over half were also happy with their family contact through mail (59.7%) and visits (54.0%).

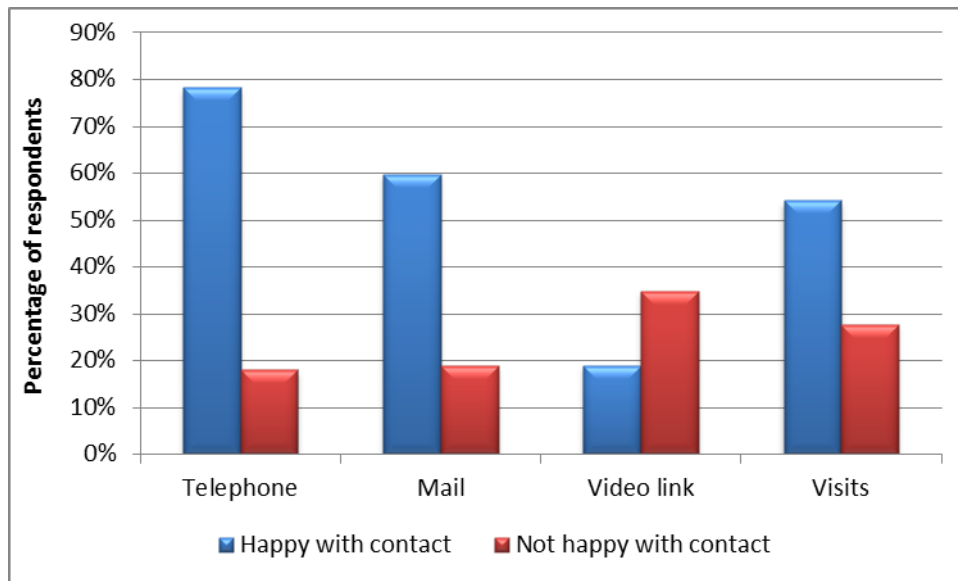


Figure 10

Respondents satisfaction with family contact through various mediums.

- 2.51 A higher proportion of Aboriginal people were happy with their telephone contact (82.8%) compared to non-Aboriginal people (74.7%). The opposite occurred for family contact through visits, with half Aboriginal respondents (49.9%) indicating they were satisfied with their contact compared to 59.6 per cent of non-Aboriginal people. Most respondents (53.1%) believed respect was shown to their visitors.
- 2.52 Over two thirds of prisoners were satisfied with their telephone contact with their families. Satisfaction was highest for minimum security prisoners (83.9%), compared to medium (77.3%) and maximum security prisoners (66.9%). A similar pattern emerged with contact through visits with minimum security prisoners being most satisfied (58.8%), compared to medium (55.1%) and maximum security prisoners (44.6%). Most minimum security prisoners (60.6%) believed respect was shown to their visitors while only one in five maximum security prisoners (39.9%) believed this to be true.

3 Staff

Respondent profile

- 3.1 Like the prisoner surveys, the number of responses to staff surveys was generally low, ranging from as little as 18 responses to a high of 96 responses in each facility. Overall there were 674 staff who responded to the survey over the three year period.

Table 4

Staff respondent profile

Role	
Prison, Senior or Principal Officer	60.98%
Vocational Support Officer	27.45%
Other (Education, Health, Administration etc)	7.57%
Length of employment at the Department	
Less than 1	4.60%
1-5 years	39.17%
5-10 years	22.70%
10-15 years	10.09%
15-20 years	9.20%
20-25 years	4.60%
Over 25 years	4.01%
Length of employment at current facility	
Less than 1	7.27%
1-5 years	46.44%
5-10 years	22.26%
10-15 years	7.57%
15-20 years	5.04%
20-25 years	2.82%
Over 25 years	0.89%

Working conditions

- 3.2 Almost all staff (93.9%) indicated they felt mostly or always safe in their work environment.
- 3.3 Over half the respondents (59.9%) felt that staff worked well together, although this varied considerably between facilities. In one facility only 28.6 per cent of respondents thought staff worked well together while in another 87.5 per cent believed this to be true.
- 3.4 Staff generally perceived their relationships with their line manager to be better than the relationships with their local manager and head office.

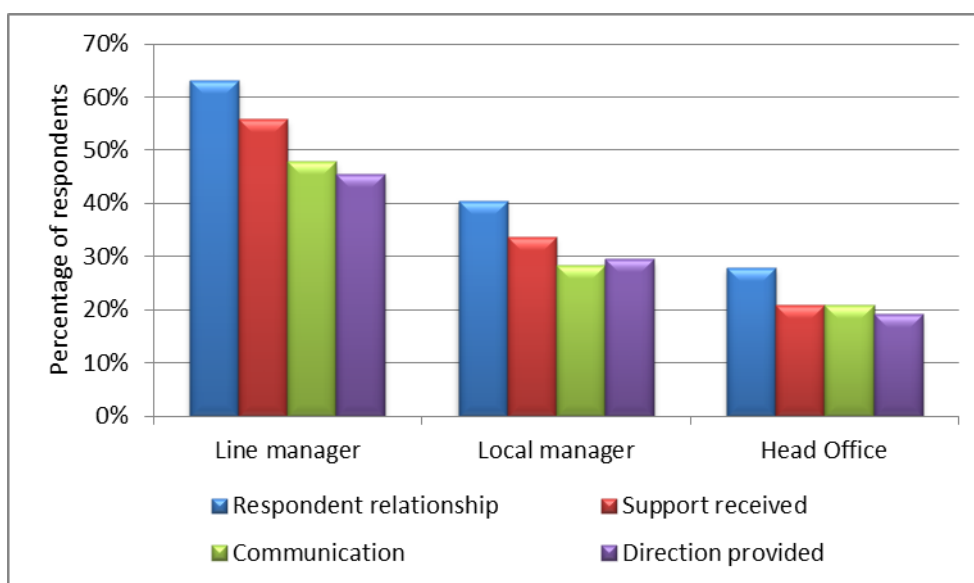


Figure 11

Percentage of respondents who reported having a 'good' relationship with the differing types of management.

- 3.5 A quarter (24.8%) of the respondents felt the facility they worked in was of poor quality, with only 15.6 per cent believing the facility to be very good. The rest believed the facilities to be mixed (27.2%) or adequate (31.6%). A similar breakdown of responses occurred when staff were asked if the facilities were well maintained (poor 27.5%; mixed 27.8%, adequate 31.0%, very good 13.0%). This varied considerably between facilities, with over half the respondents in two maximum security facilities rating the maintenance of the facility as poor.
- 3.6 Only half the respondents (55%) felt there were sufficient resources at their facility. This also varied considerably between facilities, ranging from 20.0 per cent to 87.9 per cent.
- 3.7 The average staff quality of life rating was 6.25 where 10 indicated the highest quality of life. The average rating for level of work-related stress was 5.80.¹³

Staff and prisoner relationships

- 3.8 Most respondents (70.6%) reported that there is a good relationship between staff and prisoners. A further 25.5 per cent felt that staff and prisoners had a mixed relationship.

¹³ 10 indicated the highest level of stress.

3.9 Most staff agreed with the statement that prisoners respond to decent treatment, and believed that other staff also believed this to be true. Few staff believed that prisoners can be rehabilitated, although this result may be due to questionnaire design.¹⁴

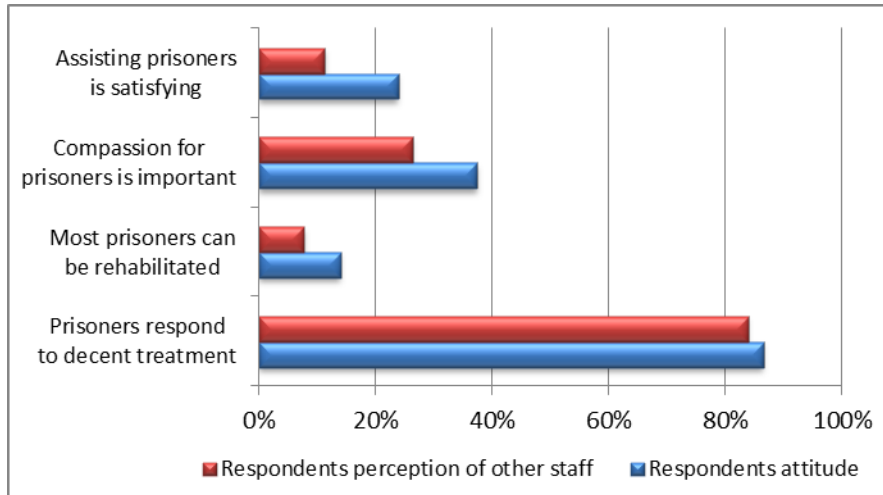


Figure 12

Percentage of respondents who believed statements about prisoners to be true.

3.10 Staff generally thought the prisons were able to meet the cultural needs of Aboriginal prisoners more than those from other culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

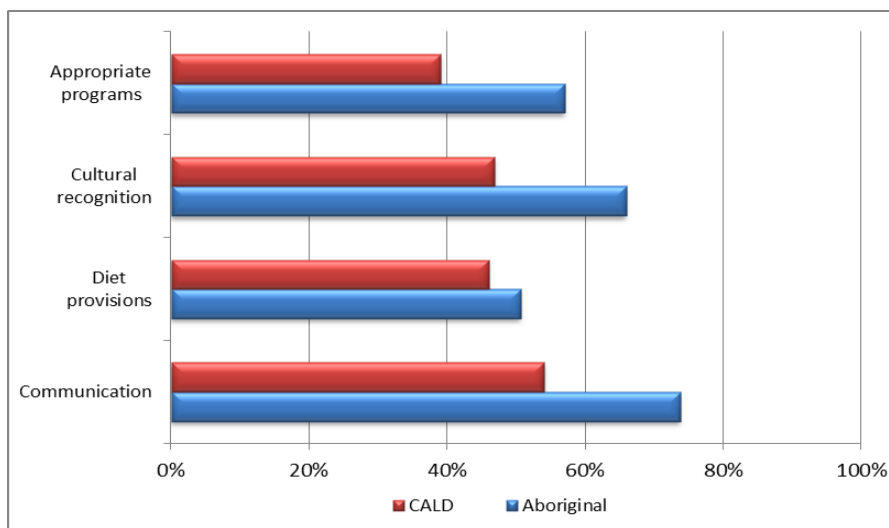


Figure 13

Percentage of respondents who felt certain needs of CALD and Aboriginal prisoners were not met.

¹⁴ Staff were asked to select any of four statements which describe their attitude to prisoners or the attitude of other staff. Some respondents may have interpreted this question as a request to select only the most appropriate statement. Over half the respondents only selected the statement regarding decent treatment (own attitude 49.4%, staff attitude 59.1%). The low numbers of staff agreeing to other statements may be a result of a misinterpretation of the question.

- 3.11 Most staff believed that sexual abuse between prisoners occurred sometimes (65.6%) or often (7.0%). This varied between facilities, with almost all staff at the four large metropolitan facilities believing this occurred sometimes or often (ranging from 83.6% of staff believing this occurred to 95.5%).
- 3.12 Staff also reported that other forms of negative behaviour such as physical assault, racist remarks, other verbal abuse and bullying occurred sometimes or often in their facilities. Most also felt that these behaviours were directed at staff.

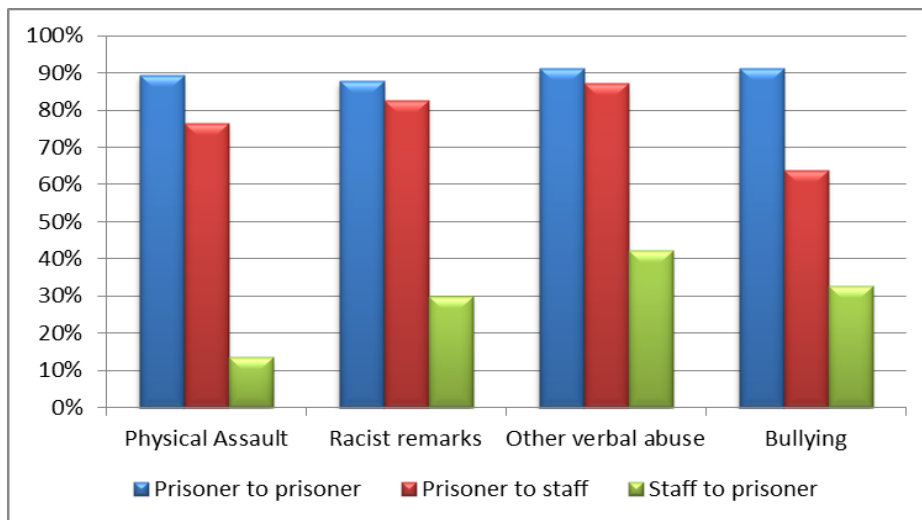


Figure 14

Percentage of respondents who believed assault and abuse to be occurring sometimes or often in their facility.

Prison officer role

- 3.13 In order of importance, staff were asked to rank a list of areas in which prison officers may have a role. A ranking of one was the most important. Providing safety for staff and prisoners was perceived to be the most important role with over half the respondents ranking this as either one or two.

Table 5

Ranking of importance of role of prison officer

Role	Average ranking
Safety for staff and prisoners	2.03
Prison security	2.42
The smooth running of the prison	3.87
Community protection	4.40
Prisoner discipline	4.86
Providing a positive influence or role model	5.00
Prisoner support	5.96
Prisoner advocacy	7.33
A partner in rehabilitation	7.42

Training

- 3.14 Less than half of prisoner officers believed that they had received adequate training in managing people with mental health issues (25.1%), managing people with drug issues (37.5%) or responding to an emergency where there was a loss of control of the facility (40.4%). For the later, most prisoner officers who had been with the Department for less than a year (72.7%) thought they had been provided adequate training for a loss of control, however these people are unlikely to be in control during an incident. Well over half the other staff believed they had not received adequate training.

Security

- 3.15 More than half the prison officers (59.1%) believed maintaining security in their facilities was good. Very few prison officers (17.8%) felt that measures to prevent contraband entering the facility was good, with over a third believing this to be poor.

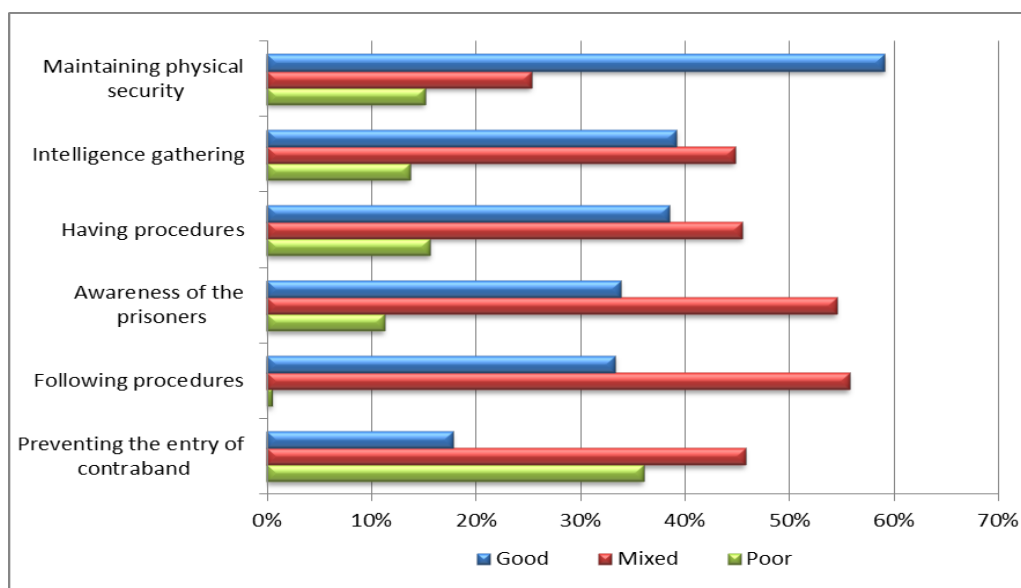


Figure 15

Prison Officer perceptions of effectiveness of security measures.

- 3.16 Only a half of prison officers (55.2%) believed there were sufficient mechanisms to promote positive behaviour and more than a third (37.5%) believed the charges and prosecutions process used to punish prisoners for breaches of discipline did not operate effectively.

Prisoner conditions

- 3.17 Prison officers generally believed prison conditions to be adequate, with the exception of cell space, access to visits, and the cleanliness of the grounds, buildings, and prisoners.

Table 6*Percentage of prison officers rating the prison conditions as adequate*

Prison condition	% of staff rating conditions as adequate
Canteen	88.08
Access to funerals	80.54
Provision of legal resources	78.83
Access to the library	77.37
Access to sport and physical recreation	73.72
Provisions for prisoner property in their cell	73.72
Food	72.75
Visits facilities	72.75
Access to bedding	60.10
Access to clothing	58.15
Ability of the prisoners to keep themselves clean	49.88
Access to visits	49.88
Cleanliness of grounds and buildings	49.88
Quality of cell space	45.74

- 3.18 In comparison few prison officers believed prisoner services were adequate, in particular less than a third rating meaningful employment and mental health services as adequate. The exception was the chaplaincy service which was predominately rated as adequate with only two people (less than 1%) rating this service as poor.

Table 7*Percentage of prison officers rating the prison services as adequate*

Prison services	% of staff rating services as adequate
Chaplaincy	86.37
Education	73.97
Case management	70.56
Vocational training	64.96
Suicide prevention and at-risk management	53.77
Re-entry services	52.55
Programs	48.66
In prison health services	48.18
Access to health specialists	45.26
Services for prisoners in other forms of crisis	43.80
Mental health services	34.79
Meaningful employment	31.14

4 Summary

One of the most important ways to reduce reoffending is to provide prisoners with an environment which is as close to 'normal' as possible. This is balanced against the risk to the community in providing more relaxed security. As expected, prisoners whose environment was closer to normal rated their quality of life higher. Those in minimum security facilities were more satisfied with services and perceived their relationships with staff to be better.

Aboriginal prisoners were far less likely to believe that staff were fair and respectful to prisoners than non-Aboriginal respondents. Most Aboriginal people felt that staff neither respected nor understood their culture.

Satisfaction with services varied, depending on the service, the security level of the facility and age of the respondents. However, over half the respondents across the state respondents were dissatisfied with food quality. More than one in five also stated they were unhappy with food quantity, access to recreation, and clothing.

Prisoners generally reported being engaged in some form of activity during the day, but the time spent on these activities was variable. Most people who engaged in education and external activities believed it would help in the future, while those involved in more mundane activities, such as unit maintenance did not think the work would be helpful. This is despite one in five prisoners listing unit maintenance as their main activity.

Most prisoners felt safe despite the high numbers of staff perceiving assault, particularly prisoner on prisoner assault to be occurring. Almost all staff indicated they felt mostly or always safe in their work environment.

Almost three quarters of staff felt there was a good relationship between staff and prisoners with a further quarter believing the relationship to be mixed. Very few thought it was poor. Four in five staff agreed with the statement that prisoners responded to decent treatment.

Prison officers generally believed prison conditions to be adequate and prison services to be adequate, with the exception of health services and meaningful employment.



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